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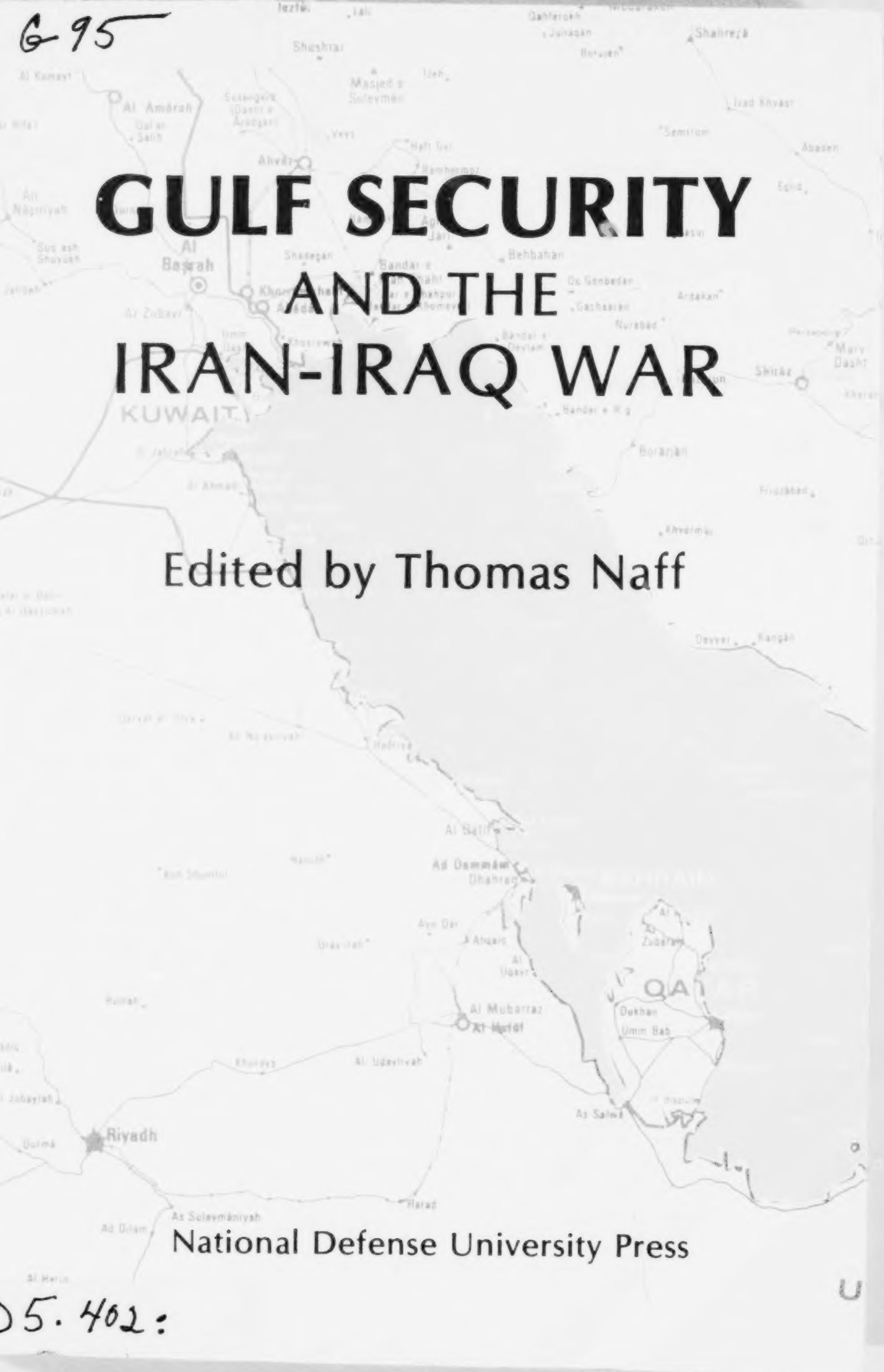
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GULF SECURITY
AND THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR

Edited by Thomas Naff

National Defense University Press

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GULF SECURITY AND THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR

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GULF SECURITY AND THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR

EDITED BY THOMAS NAFF

1985

The National Defense University Press
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The Middle East Research Institute

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 85–000000.

Renee Loeffler, System Analytics of Virginia, Inc., indexed this book under contract DAHC32–86–A–0004.

First Printing December 1985.

NDU Press publications are sold by the US Government Printing Office. For ordering information, call (202) 783-3238 or write to: Superintendent of Documents, US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

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FOREWORD

In cooperation with the National Defense University, The Middle East Research Institute organized seminars to examine how the Iran-Iraq war has affected defense policies in the Persian Gulf States. Edited by Dr. Thomas Naff of the Institute, this volume is a selected collection of papers presented at those seminars. Because events in the Gulf have international significance, the relationship of the war to the strategies of the United States and the Soviet Union is explored, as are the effects of the war on Gulf State neighbors such as Egypt and Pakistan. Other papers concentrate on the specific defense policies of Iran and Iraq.

Security in the Persian Gulf area is a paramount US policy goal, enunciated in the Carter Doctrine and upheld by President Reagan. The historically complex cultural, religious, economic, and political characteristics and alliances of the region have been further complicated by the Iran-Iraq war and its potential for escalation. The National Defense University is pleased to join with the Middle East Research Institute in the publication of this collection focusing on relevant issues of Gulf and Middle East security.

Richard D Lawrence

RICHARD D. LAWRENCE
Lieutenant General, US Army
President, National Defense University

The Middle East Research Institute (MERI) is a unit of the University of Pennsylvania which brings together American and Middle Eastern academics and non-academics from a broad variety of fields and backgrounds. Its staff, Fellows, and Associates represent a productive mixture of professionals with extensive and varied experience in the Middle East. All of the Institute's activities benefit from the resulting breadth of knowledge, skills, and exposure.

The Institute's major activities are basic and applied research, non-degree training, conferences, seminars, colloquia, and briefings. It publishes political, economic and strategic updates, country reports and special reports, books and journals. Its computerized Database Unit is one of the world's most extensive resources for information on the contemporary Middle East. MERI's relationships with local institutions throughout the Middle East help to ensure that its research efforts are fully informed by current information and developments and that the products of MERI research are acceptable to and supported by local authorities.

PREFACE

That part of the Middle East referred to as "the Gulf" has been of pivotal strategic importance in modern times. Over the past three decades, the stability and security of this region have become increasingly critical factors in the Middle East policies of the superpowers, and consequently one of the sharper focuses of their global rivalry. Just how vital to their interests the superpowers perceive the Gulf to be, and how complex are the issues involved, can be illustrated by the evolution of American policies toward the area. It could easily be demonstrated that the policies of the Soviet Union reveal comparable and parallel concerns.

The importance attached to the Gulf by American policymakers was made clear by President Carter in January 1981. Mr. Carter delineated the US posture through a device often favored by American presidents with an eye to posterity: he enunciated a doctrine. Concerned by the Iran-Iraq war and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the President stated that the United States would resist, by military means if necessary, any efforts by an "outside force" to "gain control" of the "Gulf region." President Reagan not only accepted Carter's statement in its entirety, he extended it to US involvement should the area become destabilized from regional, i.e. local, causes. Neither of these policy statements was subjected to public or congressional debate. Further, as the papers in this volume demonstrate, the full implications of such policies appear not to have been thought through.

President Reagan's extension of the doctrine, by implying a readiness for the United States to become involved in a local internal upheaval or in an intra-regional conflict, compounded the dilemma of how to commit US forces in adequate numbers, with essential air and naval support, without bases or staging areas and in the face of Arab resistance to deploying an RDF in the first place.

Perhaps the most basic shortcoming was that these large policy statements were laid down in the absence of a comprehensive political-military strategic framework for the Gulf region. Should either the Carter Doctrine or the Reagan Extension be invoked, what would be the mission of a US military intervention without clear policy objectives?

It would appear that Presidents Carter and Reagan have made firm commitments to military action in the Gulf if necessary, but without the capacity to project and sustain military forces in the region and without a clearly achievable mission for the military to accomplish. With the disaster that befell the American marines in Beirut etched into painful memory, the issue of committing forces to an ambiguous military mission is one of understandable sensitivity to US military leaders.

When President Carter issued his doctrine, the United States lacked the capacity for effective military intervention in the Gulf. There was no American Rapid Deployment Force (RDF). Even if there had been an RDF, the United States lacked bases in the region from which to conduct operations, and still lacks adequate staging areas. Nor was it possible to provide essential air cover for an RDF expedition, again owing to a lack of air stations in the area from which American planes can operate. Consequently, any military thrust in the Gulf area attempted by the United States would entail very high risks with very low chances for success.

Such ambiguity is intrinsic to the fact that the problems of the Gulf are essentially political in nature and will not yield to military solutions. In this context, the relevant aspect of the political problem is expressed in the reluctance of the

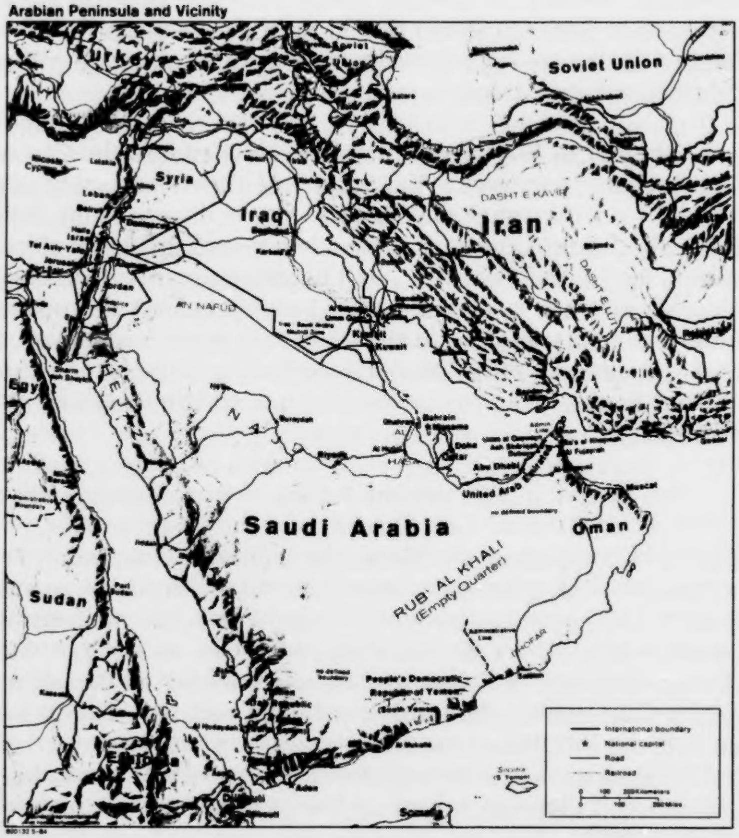
Arab states to provide the United States with the military bases and facilities it needs. This reluctance even on the part of America's strongest Arab supporters, who privately desire American military protection, stems from the political price they would have to pay for that kind of cooperation with the United States owing primarily to America's stance on the Palestinian-Israeli issue.

Whether or not US policy remains locked into the Carter and Reagan "doctrines," the impact of American action (or inaction) on the other Gulf actors—the Iranians, Iraqis, the GCC, the Soviet Union, and even two peripherially involved states, Egypt and Pakistan—will be considerable. The very fact that two US presidents have been prepared to engage American military forces in the Gulf even in such ambiguous and risk-laden conditions attests to the importance the United States attaches to the nations of the Gulf and its environs.

The papers in this volume emerged from a seven-week series of seminars on Gulf Security and the Iraq-Iran War, organized in the spring of 1984 by the Middle East Research Institute (MERI) on behalf of the National Defense University (NDU). The Institute arranged for specialists, the majority of whom were staffers or Associates of MERI, to analyze and discuss the motives, interests, and objectives of all the actors in the Gulf within the context of Gulf security. Taken together, the insights of the collected papers provide a kind of trail map to guide us through the undergrowth of conflicting policies and interests in one of the most dangerous regions of the world.

THOMAS NAFF

Arabian Peninsula and Vicinity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Chapter 1

THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL AND PERSIAN GULF SECURITY

Michael Sterner

REGIONAL ACTORS IN THE GULF

The conservative Arab states that make up the Gulf Cooperation Council (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Oman) face a perplexing array of external threats and internal vulnerabilities. External dangers, most prominently the Iran-Iraq war and the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, are compounded by a general deterioration of Arab relations over such issues as conflict in Lebanon, relations with Egypt, and the Palestinian problem, as well as by the dynamic relationship between regional turbulence and fragile domestic stability.

In their search for appropriate responses to these security dilemmas, Gulf leaders betray deep ambivalences. Aware that ultimately they depend on American power to deter Soviet expansionism, regional actors nevertheless tend to downplay Soviet aggressive intentions, and are painfully aware of the domestic and regional ramifications of a more visible US military presence in the Gulf. Fearful of an Iranian victory in the war with Iraq, the GCC states have attempted to support Iraq without closing the door entirely to a dialogue with the current regime in Tehran. Internally, Gulf leaders have thus far managed to contain various disturbances that followed in the wake of the Iranian Revolution, but the essentially conservative nature and Western orientation of their regimes leave them vulnerable should an Iranian victory over Iraq give new impetus to the "Islamic Republic" concept. A new period of reduced oil income further aggravates the situation; although the economic picture is improving, budget austerity has produced resentment among some elements, particularly within the private business sector.

Faced with the weakness of their own regimes and societies, and the inadequacy of alliances to compensate for that weakness, Gulf leaders have turned toward regional arrangements in the hopes of buttressing their security. Although each member operates under unique constraints and with differing socio-political environments, these states share fundamental security interests. The emergence of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) marks a positive step toward the limited and realistic goals of presenting a stronger political front against aggression, sharing intelligence to counter internal subversion, and establishing a framework for cooperation and rationalization in the economic arena.

To understand the establishment of a regional security framework, its likely development and the challenges it will face two factors are important: first, the historical record of security maintenance, from the era of British power to the collapse of the US "twin pillars" strategy; second, the Gulf leaders' perceptions of security threats—internal dangers, inter-Arab conflicts, the Palestinian question, superpower rivalry, the Iranian revolution, and the Iran-Iraq war.

THE HISTORICAL RECORD: FROM BRITISH PROTECTION TO AMERICA'S "TWIN PILLARS" STRATEGY

British political interest and involvement in the Persian Gulf dates from the late 18th century, and stems from British concerns for the protection of its sea lanes to India. Aside from the dangers to traders of marauding pirates—Zaman Shah's invasion of northern India from Afghanistan and the French occupation of Egypt in 1798—events of strategic consequence motivated British action. Agreements with Iran and

Muscat were quickly concluded, apparently with a view to establishing pressure on Afghanistan and a buffer against the French. The overriding British objective was to find the least taxing means for keeping order in the trade lanes. Little concern was shown for the littoral sheikhdoms and city states.

The discovery of oil in the Gulf at the dawn of the twentieth century changed Britain's regional policy. For the first time, the internal stability of the Gulf provinces became an important matter in British eyes, as a necessary condition for the protection of oil concessions and commercial contracts. World War I brought British power in the Gulf to its apogee. However, this situation was short-lived. Costly rebellion in Iraq and strong nationalist resistance in Iran led the British to remove their forces from Iran, and to prepare Iraq for independence. After World War II, Britain reluctantly faced up to the combination of a flagging economy, international pressures for de-colonization, and its declining role as a world power, eventually announcing, in 1968, the intention to withdraw from the region.

The newly independent states of the southern Gulf reacted in a variety of ways conditioned by both the specific threats facing them and their internal political structures. The British decision had little impact on Omani policies, for the deeply conservative and isolated sultanate chose to keep its British advisors, and even accepted Iranian help in suppressing the Dhofari rebellion. Kuwait, at the other end of the spectrum, had declared its independence in 1961, and maintained relations with the Soviet Union, partly to counter Iraqi territorial claims, as well as to demonstrate Arab nationalist and non-aligned credentials (a position congenial to Kuwait's large Palestinian population). Some of the leaders of the new mini-states hoped the United States would fill the gap left by Great Britain, but the Nixon administration was not eager to undertake new international responsibilities, preferring to look to regional power centers for the protection of American interests. A "twin pillars" strategy was announced—the two pillars being Iran and Saudi Arabia—but this was essentially a euphemism for a policy actually based on supporting Iran as the main regional bulwark against the Soviets and radicalism.

Although the Shah was eager and willing to play the role of policeman, Arab leaders were less than sanguine at the prospect of "protection" by Iran, given the latter's many outstanding territorial disputes with its southern neighbors and its traditional hegemonic predilections. Although the Shah accepted the Bahrainis' decision in favor of independence (rather than a link with Iran), Arab fears were heightened by the Iranian occupation of the Tunb islands and Abu Musa, claimed by the UAE. Eventually, Iranian concern for potential Arab radical expansionism subsided, however, and the Gulf states established an impressive record of conflict management, based on the shared interest in promoting conditions of stability.

The collapse of the Shah in 1978/79 radically altered the nature of Gulf relations and the newly emerging security system. Inter-state rivalry in the Gulf was transformed from an essentially narrow, inter-dynastic focus on territorial disputes into an all-encompassing ideological confrontation between revolutionary Iran and the essentially conservative regimes across the Gulf. Formerly, a common interest in regional stability and parallel domestic systems helped Gulf leaders to resolve their differences. After the revolution, this framework for conflict management collapsed; the new rulers in Tehran challenged even the domestic legitimacy of neighboring regimes. The ideological content thereby injected into the entire range of specific disputes precluded settlement based on pragmatic criteria.

GULF STATES' PERCEPTIONS OF SECURITY THREATS

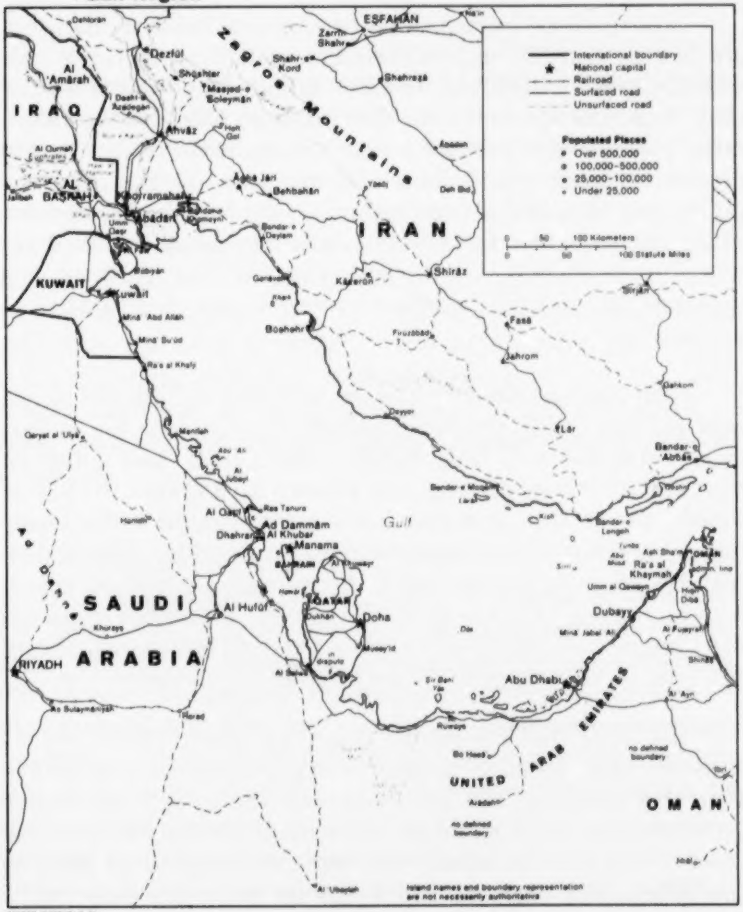
Internal Vulnerabilities

Gulf leaders' perceptions of regional security dangers are heavily conditioned by their preoccupation with the task of nation-state building and the domestic political forces they must contend with in the process. Everywhere rulers must balance the fears of conservatives, who object to the erosion of traditional values and the growing gap between public morality and private behavior, against the aspirations of Western-educated technocrats and a growing middle class who, frustrated by waste and a restrictive political environment, seek more responsive and efficient political institutions.

With the exception of Oman, in all the Gulf states Sunni regimes rule Shias, the latter actually constituting the majority of inhabitants in Iraq, Bahrain and Dubai, and about 20 percent of the population in Kuwait and Qatar. In Saudi Arabia, the smaller Shia element is concentrated in the sensitive oil-producing al-Hasa province. Prodded by militant Iranian broadcasts, this scattered, historically oppressed group is of increasing concern to Gulf regimes. In Bahrain in particular, the rise of Kohmeini inspires greater confidence among the Shia in voicing political and economic protests.

The potential for unrest is not confined to the Shias. However, the greatest danger is that the Iranian revolution and the concept of an "Islamic Republic" (however unsatisfactory in practice the Khomeini model has thus far been in the eyes of most Arabs) pose the idea of an alternative to existing regimes and focus on their perceived deficiencies. This could end up energizing disaffected elements within the Sunni community as much as among the Shia. For the Saudis, this is an especially disconcerting development. Accustomed to their role of defenders of religious purity, the Saudis have proven adept at containing secularism, but are

Gulf Region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less confident when dealing with religious challenges from the right. In the face of this threat, the Saudis repeat their claims to Islamic legitimacy at home, while pressuring their more secular Gulf neighbors to burnish their own Islamic credentials and criticising the unorthodox ways of the Iranian militants. Although the House of Saud maintains close ties with the ulama (the ecclesiastics of religious authority), the latter's very association with the regime, and failure to protest secularization and Westernization, has to some extent eroded the position of religious authorities.

The large body of expatriate workers is often cited as another internal danger. The potential threat posed by the expatriate community has, however, been somewhat exaggerated—most are in the Gulf to earn a quick nest egg, and appear unlikely to jeopardize that goal by indulging in political activism. The Palestinian presence, however, constitutes a greater political problem. Numbering some 300,000 in Kuwait and 80,000 in Saudi Arabia, the Palestinians enjoy high-ranking governmental and commercial positions of political sensitivity. A Palestinian community radicalized by further frustrations on the Arab-Israel issue can make joint cause with other radical movements and pose serious internal problems for the regimes of the smaller Gulf states, particularly Kuwait. Although the Palestinians have a vested economic interest in regime stability, the combination of the Arab states' lack of effective action against Israel and unwillingness to grant Palestinians a more institutionalized role in society will result in an increasingly volatile and destabilizing atmosphere.

The specter of Islamic extension poses uncomfortable dilemmas for those ruling elites who are seeking ways of broadening popular support for their regimes. Fear that even marginal gestures toward a larger political role for the governed might undermine the strength of the regimes' patriarchal and Islamic-based legitimacy limits the options available to rulers in their effort to release frustrations.

Inter-Arab Conflict

Since the secular radical onslaught of the 1950s and 1960s, the conservative Arab Gulf states have cultivated flexible alliances to counterbalance hostile alignments in the Arab world. The Arab monarchies of the Gulf survived the radical challenge, and secularism has lost its domestic appeal in the Gulf region. The GCC continues to attend to inter-Arab problems, playing a mediating role in a wide range of conflicts. The overall objective of the conservative oil-producers is to sustain the "Arab consensus," even if that requires financially backing otherwise unpalatable governments, such as that of Hafez al-Assad, President of Syria. Demonstrably, such support does not readily translate into effective leverage; but it is hoped by the dispensers of aid that at least it will be an insurance policy against external aggression or political subversion.

Closer to home, threats from Baghdad, a traditional trouble-maker for the Kuwaitis, have been effectively foreclosed for the duration of the Gulf war. The most recent inter-Arab success has been the rapprochement between Oman and South Yemen, after fifteen years of undisguised hostility. Antagonism persisted after the end of the Yemeni-supported Dhofari rebellion, but persistent Kuwaiti and GCC mediation efforts resulted in an agreement to exchange representatives and work toward a resolution of border disputes. Undoubtedly, the longevity of this pragmatic approach depends on the direction of domestic political currents in South Yemen. But for the moment, eased tensions allow Oman and its GCC associates to concentrate on graver threats from the north.

The Arab-Israeli Issue

While the impact of the Iran-Iraq war is the main preoccupation of Gulf leaders at present, the unresolved Palestinian issue is seen by all as a continuing source of trouble in the Arab arena. The Arab-Israeli problem is a highly emotional issue in the region, not simply among the Palestinian population directly. It is linked to genuine feelings of solidarity with the Palestinian cause and a collective sense of frustration and betrayal by the West.

The issue has been exacerbated by the crisis within the PLO brought on by Israel's invasion of Lebanon. The Saudis have worked assiduously to strengthen the moderate wing of the PLO. This has the double advantage of undermining Palestinian extremists while establishing the Kingdom's Arab credentials in the stand against Israel. Unfortunately for GCC planners, the drubbing received by al-Fatah, first at the hands of Israel and then by the Syrian-backed PLO rebels, has set back their moderating strategy; meanwhile, the continued impasse in negotiations on the Palestinian question exposes the GCC governments to criticism and possible terrorist violence because of their close connections to Washington.

Superpower Rivalry

Western estimates of Soviet objectives in the Middle East range widely, from belief that the Kremlin is merely concerned with protecting its borders to the view that the Soviets are embarked on an expansionist drive to the waters and oil fields of the Gulf. It is probably safe to conclude that the Soviets will take advantage of opportunities to work toward the neutralization of the US presence in the region. Like the United States, however, the Soviet Union has a rather mixed record of influencing its Middle East "clients," including Syria, Iraq, and South Yemen. Acceptance of Soviet military aid and advisors has not kept regional actors from maintaining a flexible posture vis-a-vis their more conservative neighbors. In fact, it is conceivable that the Soviets have encouraged Aden, for example, in its rapprochement with Oman and Saudi Arabia, as part of its own effort to court the moderate Arabs.

Despite the invasion of Afghanistan, Gulf leaders tend to downplay fears of overt Soviet aggression, focusing instead on the likelier prospect of Soviet-supported internal insurgency. Although Soviet activity in Afghanistan does bring a renewed sense of threat to the region, the GCC regimes seem to hold deeply ambivalent views regarding an appropriate response to the danger. The Kuwaitis contend that their GCC allies should follow their path of recognizing Moscow and maintaining a dialogue with the Soviets, a posture which has non-aligned symbolic value, puts the United States on notice not to take its regional friends for granted, and allows for more flexible maneuvering in tune with shifts in the overall global balance of power. Oman stands at the other extreme: with vivid memories of the Soviet-backed Dhofari rebellion, the Omani regime is outspoken in its warnings of the Soviet threat and unembarrassed in its reliance on US and Western European assistance to offset that threat.

The other GCC members, following the Saudi lead, have to a certain extent lost their former paranoia regarding communism and the Soviets. It appears that, on balance, a consensus is moving toward the view that a normal relationship with the Soviet Union has several advantages: a greater stake in positive relations with the conservatives might moderate Soviet behavior, while the Arabs themselves might gain greater leverage in arenas with a Soviet involvement, such as relations with and between the Yemens. Perhaps most importantly, the weak American response to the intervention in Afghanistan, and the US inability to do anything to sustain the Shah's regime, suggested to the Arabs that the balance of power was shifting, and that Moscow would remain a force to be reckoned with in the region. Thus some GCC elites are concluding that it is better to hedge one's bets than to rely solely on an erratic American commitment.

If the Gulf states are, in fact, moving toward such views, they are doing so slowly and hesitantly. A series of statements in 1979 and 1980 by then Crown Prince Fahd and

Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal emphasized the importance of recognizing the reality of Soviet power and appeared to suggest that the establishment of diplomatic relations was just around the corner. Although the Saudis and Soviets are maintaining an informal dialogue through a variety of channels, the Saudis have yet to take this step, presumably because of the USSR's continued occupation of Afghanistan. More recently, rumors appeared in Kuwaiti newspapers after the November 1983 GCC summit in Doha that the UAE, Qatar, and Bahrain were about to establish diplomatic relations with Moscow. The reports were denied, but are an indication that the idea is under study.

The importance placed by GCC rulers on cultivating a dialogue with the Soviet Union is obviously also conditioned by the state of relations with Washington and their perceptions of the efficacy of the American connection. The Saudis continue to recognize that the US is the only power that can respond with rapid military assistance in a crisis; what they question is whether the kind of conventional military assistance that the US can provide is relevant to the types of threat scenarios the Kingdom most likely faces, and whether, therefore, an open reliance upon the US for security is worth the domestic and regional political risks. This uncertainty regarding the efficacy of the Saudis' "special relationship" with the United States, as well as of the smaller sheikhdoms' security links to it, serves as an important motivation behind moves toward a diversification of arms suppliers, as well as renewed attention to regional security arrangements.

IMPACT OF THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION AND THE IRAQ-IRAN WAR

The collapse of the Shah's regime, its replacement by an "Islamic Republic" based on doctrines of anti-Western messianism, and the outbreak of a bitter war between Iran and Iraq, have presented the Arab Gulf states with the severest security challenge they have yet had to face. Other preoccupations such as those we have described briefly above have been eclipsed by this new development—the establishment of an openly unfriendly and crusading regime in Iran, the region's most powerful state. The threat has been two-fold: first, that Tehran's brand of religious zeal would infect local populations and create serious internal pressures; second, that Iran might launch overt military attacks against Arab Gulf states' weak defenses and vulnerable economic infrastructures.

If it were not for the Iran-Iraq conflict, the Gulf Arabs would have moved rapidly—and very possibly with considerable success—to accommodate and mollify the new regime in Tehran. This would have required adjustments in their own policies and even taking some steps to make their own societies more "Islamic," at least in appearance. The Gulf Arabs developed a good deal of skill at this sort of thing in the turbulent seventies, when they had to fend off numerous claims on their territory from more powerful neighbors and accede to the Shah's demand for primacy in Gulf affairs.

The war has placed these states in an impossible dilemma. If they fail to provide Baghdad with support, they risk seeing the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime. This would remove restraints from Khomeini's Islamic revolution and thereby gravely threaten their own regimes. On the other hand, support for Baghdad vitiates their instinctive preference for a program of diplomacy and policy adjustment that would moderate Iran's hostility. In fact, some of the smaller states (pleading to Baghdad their own straitened economic circumstances) have already reduced their assistance to Iraq and attempted to trim their sails in Tehran's direction. On the whole, maintaining support for Iraq is seen as entailing the lesser of two evils. Now that Iraq is fighting "for its own homeland" they feel on somewhat firmer moral and political ground.

The Gulf Arabs have been dejected by the impact of the war on the Arab consensus. If their own rallying to Baghdad's support had been reinforced by a solid Arab front behind Iraq, they would have at least felt in good company. Instead the conflict has deepened the cleavage in Arab ranks between radicals and moderates, with Syria and Libya supporting Iran. Libyan policy can be dismissed, but it has caused Saudi Arabia in particular much discomfort to find itself in opposite camps with Syria over this issue. That even some Arab governments should find enough merit in what is happening in Iran to cause them to side with Iran against an "Arab brother" has deepened the dilemma for the Gulf Arabs and contributed to their caution.

In ideal terms, the conservative Arab states of the Arabian Peninsula would probably like to see the conflict so weaken both of their powerful neighbors that neither could pose a threat. Thus, they might conclude that an indefinite continuation of the conflict, sapping the energies of both parties, would be in their interests. However, there is too much bitterness and ideological fervor involved in this war, and it has too much potential for uncontrolled escalation, for them to be comfortable with this thesis. They would like to see the conflict settled on almost any terms—indeed, if a settlement could be facilitated by reparations payments to Iran, they would undoubtedly be prepared to pay a major portion of the price.

Perceptions of heightened security threats have made the Gulf Arabs more receptive to security cooperation with the United States, obviously the only power that can deploy the military force to protect them against Iran. In recent conversations with Gulf governments about cooperation to meet various contingencies, the Arabs barely referred to their usual complaints about US policy on the Arab-Israel issue, even though these talks took place in the immediate aftermath of Washington's announcement that its "strategic cooperation" with Israel had been resumed. Still, the attitude of the Gulf governments remains cautious: in addition to the baggage that Washington carries on the Arab-Israel issue, the Gulf Arabs now have to worry that an overt association with the United States would further anger Tehran and add to their troubles. Their response was indicative of the dilemma they feel—that while they did not want a US military presence on their shores at this time, or to give any firm commitments for prepositioning or contingency use of facilities, they nevertheless hoped the United States would be there when the chips were down. In other words, in spite of heightened security concerns, there is no basic change in these governments' preference that the US military presence remain "over the horizon."

There are no attractive options for these states in attempting to meet their security concerns. Arab alliances clearly cannot do much, yet these governments are aware that too close an identification with the United States creates as many problems as it solves. They are thrown back on their traditional policy of trying to stay on friendly terms with everybody and hoping that somehow this policy will see them through even these more difficult times. The one action that they can take that strengthens their position— without antagonizing more powerful neighbors—is to draw closer together within the Gulf Cooperation Council. The leaders of the Gulf states are tough-minded realists and they have no illusions that the GCC framework can meet the most acute security problems. Nevertheless, they would hope that it will be a political asset that will marginally improve their chances of weathering the vicissitudes of the eighties.

TOWARD A REGIONAL SECURITY FRAMEWORK

Although the idea of greater regional security cooperation has been discussed fitfully since the British withdrawal from the Gulf, throughout the 1970s there was little evidence of consensus among the Gulf states on how to achieve that end. It was generally agreed that a united front would limit the opportunities for outside intervention, strengthen the defense of the weakest Gulf entities, and work toward the difusing of rivalries among the regional states themselves. Obstacles to action, however, included the problematic role of Iran and Iraq in such a formula, for at one time or the other they were considered the principal security threats. Yet excluding either state from multilateral arrangements made it appear the organization was directed against that state and served to heighten tensions.

The varying perspectives of the other Gulf nations on the appropriate means for pursuing regional security further obstructed progress. The Kuwaitis, for example, argued in favor of a politico-diplomatic framework, which would serve as a symbol of the members' non-aligned status, and focus their attentions on mediation and the distribution of aid. The Omanis, in contrast, tended to see a collective approach as ratifying reliance on Western arms and assistance, and as a useful tool in countering the Yemenis. During the 1970s, the Gulf states had the luxury of leaving such differences unresolved, for no serious threats sufficient to motivate action were posed to the region.

The Afghanistan invasion, the Iranian revolution, and the Iran-Iraq war dramatically altered the circumstances hindering closer Gulf security cooperation. Overnight, the conservative Gulf states were presented with both the opportunity and the impetus for tighter cooperation. After the circulation of a "Kuwaiti initiative" in November 1980 (two months after Iraq's invasion of Iran), Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, and Oman formed the Gulf Cooperation Council during the spring of 1981. Desirous of avoiding Tehran's wrath, the institution initially stressed economic and social planning, but security issues eventually emerged as the organ's primary focus. Given the essentially domestic dimension of the Iranian threat, a web of bilateral internal security arrangements between the GCC members has been concluded. These agreements aim at curbing anti-government subversion and terrorism primarily through information-sharing by national intelligence agencies. A multilateral GCC accord has been drafted to cover the bilateral pacts, but the Kuwaitis, finding the extradition arrangements unacceptable, have resisted the multilateral arrangement.

Perceptions of direct Iranian and indirect Soviet threats—and the general desire to avoid a more overt American presence—have led to GCC-sponsored military cooperation, which has grown from rather tame defense studies in 1981 and 1982 to joint exercises in late September 1983, conducted at Abu Dhabi's desert military base of Suwaihan. There have also been recent reports of joint Saudi-Kuwaiti exercises in their frontier area, a significant indication that Kuwait is moving toward the mainstream GCC concern for closer military coordination. At this stage such exercises serve more of a symbolic political rather than strategic function, demonstrating the GCC's commitment to a common defense strategy. Most Western analysts conclude that the narrow military significance of any GCC measures will remain marginal.

The GCC states, even acting in unison, simply lack the manpower and infrastructure to mount an adequate defense against a determined aggressor. A beefing up of air defense systems is considered the most productive area for enhancing regional security, but the great diversity of aircraft systems within the GCC militates against meaningful coordination. The purchase of a "GCC aircraft" would only add further complexity to the array of incompatible air defense modes. There are signs that the GCC states are paying closer attention to the issue of arms compatibility in the future. For example, there has been speculation that the terms of the recently announced Franco-Saudi arms deal, whereby the Saudis will retain some control over production and hence over sales decisions, were concluded with a view toward meeting fellow GCC members' defense requirements.

Other signs of movement toward coordination include discussion by a GCC army chiefs of staff conference in October of the need to improve and unify military training. There has even been discussion by some regional leaders of the "urgent" need for a GCC rapid deployment force. While this latter suggestion may not come to fruition for some time, the GCC record of converting security convictions into concrete commitments is impressive. GCC decisions have been characterized by a realistic emphasis on the smaller, more attainable steps toward defense integration. Rather than enjoining the parties to create a common defense structure, for example, attention is focused on establishing regular ministerial channels for communications. In addition, the Omanis have been assisted by a GCC grant of $1.8 billion over twelve years to help meet general military expenses. One interesting feature for possible future development is relating GCC defense studies to the US-Jordanian program for "Joint Logistical Planning." The Jordanians have, since 1967, played a significant role in individual Gulf states' defenses, assisting the Omanis with the Dhofari rebellion and providing officers to several Gulf armies.

No one believes the Council could stop a Soviet attack, but it can work toward increasing the costs of aggressive moves by Iran, Iraq, or South Yemen, thereby serving as a deterrent. More importantly, concerted action to counter a coup attempt in the weaker sheikhdoms might prove more effective within a GCC framework. The Council provides both a symbol of the members' commitment to hang together, and a regularized framework for undertaking precautionary measures. As an indigenous response to the region's security dilemmas it is politically attractive, and thus does not offend nationalist sensibilities.

Naturally, the GCC's public posture emphasizes the organization's diplomatic contribution to regional stabilization, rather than joint defense plans. Indeed, diplomatic initiatives dominated the November summit. The GCC endeavored to send mediating delegations to end the Syrian-PLO struggle in Tripoli and the Gulf war, as well as to prod Oman and South Yemen along the conciliation path. With the exception of the latter, GCC efforts did not produce any startling successes, and, of course, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait would be involved in these initiatives anyway. A unified framework tends to give such diplomatic initiatives greater weight, however, and a greater array of carrots and sticks to utilize.

The significance of the GCC and the newly emerging regional security framework is threefold: as an information-sharing network for the containment of internal subversion and violence; as a wholly indigenous and domestically palatable framework for serious and routine consultation with a view toward enhancing members' diplomatic initiatives and deterrent capabilities against external aggression; and as a possible venue for establishing more realistic, efficient, and compatible industrial plans in an era of reduced income. Will these limited achievements prove sufficient in meeting future challenges? Much depends on events in Tehran and Baghdad. Continued stalemate on the battlefield holds the ever-present danger of escalation, particularly on the part of Iraq if the domestic pressures for an end to the struggle become unbearable. Whether a new round of fighting is initiated by Iraq or Iran, the possibility always exists of a spillover into the GCC states. Iranian aircraft have on occasion bombed Kuwait, probably as a warning that there were limits to Tehran's tolerance of trans-shipment of war material through Kuwait, and the government's financial support for Iraq.

On a less alarmist plane, a change of regime in Iran or in Iraq might provide the opportunity for a negotiated ceasefire, or even a settlement. At this point, the GCC states could begin the necessary task of searching for some basis for a *modus vivendi* with Tehran. Looking beyond Khomeini, no clearcut leader has emerged to assume his mantle. It is conceivable, therefore, that Iranian politics will enter a new state of chaos, with bids for legitimate succession based on fidelity to revolutionary principles. This translates into two general prospects for Iran's neighbors: unmitigated hostility from Tehran, if no coalition feels confident enough to leave itself open to a challenge of its revolutionary credentials; or a willingness to reach an understanding with the Gulf states in order to turn attention to domestic priorities, perhaps based on Arab recognition of Iran's paramount position in the Gulf. Whatever the nature of realignments in Tehran, the flexibility of the Gulf states will be severely tested in the endeavor to live with a turbulent Iran.

Future relations with a postwar Iraq are almost as problematic. Naturally, the specific difficulties will depend on the nature of that nation's government. For a while, it can be expected that the Iraqis will focus on the task of internal reconstruction (a prospect which itself will pose an economic challenge to OPEC, since Iraq will undoubtedly pump oil at full capacity to earn the necessary revenue). At some point, the GCC will have to face up to the problem of a renewed bid by the Iraqis for leadership of the Arab side of the Gulf, including possible interest in membership in the Council.

In a postwar era the GCC states will strive to maintain their unity to limit the chances of turmoil spreading from one state to the rest. Together, they will try to hew a middle path between Iran and Iraq in an effort to achieve a balance of power in the Gulf and limit the opportunities for superpower intervention in the region. Because the GCC states can never attain an even mildly formidable military defense posture, their attention is properly focused on diplomacy. Nevertheless, practical steps toward closer security cooperation, such as we are presently witnessing, can serve to deny the attractions of outside meddling in the affairs of the weaker members of the community, and put the larger powers on notice that the GCC states are determined to act together to preserve their political integrity.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

From the perspective of the GCC, several conclusions regarding the nature of future challenges to their security can be drawn from present conditions. The most prominent dilemma for the conservative rulers is that no definite end to the ideological threat posed in Iran is in sight. The fundamentally divergent world views of the Gulf states render traditional tools of conflict management useless. So long as Tehran is motivated to reject the legitimacy of its neighbors' domestic political systems, there can be no shared criteria for positive dialogue. Instead, the weaker Gulf regimes must pursue a course of damage limitation and maintenance of security by relying on a delicate configuration of forces that constrains Iran, limits internal turmoil in the Islamic Republic, reduces uncertainty regarding Soviet ambitions toward Iran, keeps the US deterrent "over the horizon," and allows for their constant attention to smothering internal brushfires. Secondly, recent events tend to reinforce Gulf leaders' assumptions that the primary danger to their survival is an essentially on-going internal one. It is the fear of radicalism—whether inspired by inter-Arab conflicts, the Arab-Israeli issue, the Iranian fundamentalist example, or Soviet meddling—which exercises these rulers the most, and only to a lesser extent fear of overt aggression by outside forces.

The realistic preoccupation with the dynamic relationship between external threats and domestic vulnerabilities, combined with a growing perception that the United States cannot be relied upon to help them meet many of the threats they face, has led to a reassessment of the wisdom of relying on the American commitment for security. Beyond the problems associated with specific issues, there is already discernible in the attitudes of the ruling elites in the Gulf the fear that the Arab world—possibly the entire Muslim world—may soon be swept by a new tide of radicalism, and that to survive in these circumstances, they may need to begin now to position their nations somewhat more distantly from the

West. This goes beyond formal security arrangements and could extend to a deliberate policy of weakening the myriad political, commercial, cultural, and educational ties that thus far have bound them closely to the West.

Such considerations lead naturally to a turn toward regional security arrangements to meet these challenges, as well as to close ties with fellow Muslims and more serious consideration of normalized relations with Moscow. As the GCC feels its way toward a framework more responsive to its members' concerns in today's volatile Gulf, it is important that US planners neither attempt to burden the organ with their own strategic agenda nor fear it as a neutralizing force. Beyond this the United States faces the task of determining how it can relate to a new generation in the Gulf as well as to the broader Arab world that increasingly sees the United States as an ally of the *status quo*—a *status quo* characterized not only by social and economic inequities but by a dismal spectacle of Arab weakness and divisiveness. In such a mood, even sensible leaders will have sympathy for those who cry out for some kind of new order.

Chapter 2

EGYPT AND THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR

Philip H. Stoddard

Egypt's defense and strategic policies reflect an array of calculations and judgments that derive from internal political and economic factors and international considerations. These factors are so intertwined that it is not productive to assess the nature of Egypt's policies toward the Iran-Iraq war, in general, and toward Iraq, in particular, in isolation from the broader network of Egypt's interest in the Arab world and the domestic environment in which those interests are shaped. Before focusing on Egyptian policy in the Gulf, therefore, it is necessary briefly to assess the foundations on which that policy is based.

ELEMENTS OF EGYPTIAN FOREIGN POLICY

In both the regional and international arenas, Husni Mubarak's accession to the presidency in October 1981 produced substantive shifts of emphasis in four critical areas of Egypt's foreign policy: Egyptian-Arab/Palestinian relations, Egyptian-Israeli relations, Egyptian-US relations, and Egyptian-Soviet relations. In each of these areas, Mubarak has sought to moderate the policies of Anwar Sadat without sacrificing Sadat's accomplishments. While seeking to restore Egypt's active involvement in the Arab world—a process in which relations with Iraq have played an important part—and to decrease Egypt's reliance on the United States, Mubarak has retained the fundamental components of his predecessor's policies. Mubarak has maintained close ties with the West for military assistance and economic aid, and he has preserved the letter—if not the spirit—of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.

Mubarak's determination to end Egypt's forced isolation from the Arab world has emerged as the most notable feature of his foreign policy. In this area he has moved far beyond Sadat's "Egypt first" tenet.[1] This has been a popular change. Egyptian-Arab reconciliation is welcomed by most Egyptians, who view Egypt as inextricably linked to the future of the Arab states. Sadat's insistence that Egypt's foreign policy be based "on the interest of Egypt alone ... on values only we, the people of Egypt, feel,"[2] has been replaced by Mubarak's perception that, "Egypt is a part of the Arab nation; it does not split from the Arab nation, nor does it forsake the Arab nation's causes. The reason is that Egypt's Arabism is not a garment we wear when we want and that anyone who so wants can remove from us."[3]

However, Egypt's rapprochement with the Arab world is not unconditional. This process, in Mubarak's view, must preserve Egypt's dignity and must not engage the country in costly sacrifices on behalf of other Arab states: Egyptians have had their fill of fighting and dying for other Arabs. In addition, Egyptian officials have made it clear that Egypt will not abandon the Egyptian-Israeli treaty as the price for normalizing relations with the Arab states.[4] Happily for Mubarak, Egypt has been welcomed back into the Islamic Conference Organization without having to pay any price at all.

Egypt's interest in ending its isolation from the Arab states is not based solely on domestic considerations. Its ability to influence the course of regional developments was also jeopardized by the Arab boycott. Always sensitive to the charge that the Egyptian-Israeli treaty of March 1979 was no more than a separate peace, Egypt under Mubarak has made special efforts to maintain its image as a leading force on behalf of the Palestinians, especially, in its relations with the United States.[5] Such attempts were to no avail until 1983; most Arabs, and virtually every Palestinian official, rejected Egypt's mediation.

After the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, however, the picture changed. Egypt's US connection was no longer viewed as an unmitigated liability by some Palestine Liberation

Organization (PLO) officials in Beirut; they hoped to work through Cairo to encourage US pressure on Israel. Later, the PLO's split into pro- and anti-Arafat factions afforded Egypt an opportunity to play a more important part in the peace process.

Following the expulsion of Arafat and his supporters from Tripoli, Mubarak directed his efforts toward constructing a moderate Arab bloc, consisting primarily of Jordan and the PLO, but including Saudi Arabia and Iraq as well. The Mubarak-Arafat meeting of 22 December 1983—even though it was disavowed by the Fatah Central Committee in Tunis—added legitimacy to the role Mubarak was seeking. In a visit to Washington with King Hussein on 14 February 1984, Mubarak publicly urged the Reagan Administration in strong terms to open direct negotiations with the PLO.[6]

The accelerating pace of the Egyptian-Arab rapprochement has an added dimension from the Egyptian point of view: restoring Egypt to its position of leadership in the Arab world. Even at the nadir of Egyptian-Arab relations, Egypt's regional ambitions remained alive. The tension between Arabism and "Egyptism" that has long characterized the formulation of Egyptian regional policy, and that was so apparent under Sadat, has diminished since 1981. Mubarak has been more flexible in accommodating Egypt's unique requirements, on the one hand, with a renewed sense of regional responsibility on the other.

Mubarak's immediate concern is to provide a counterweight to Syria, whose control of the militant wing of the PLO, domination of Lebanon, intimidation of Jordan, and cooperation with Iran are all viewed in Cairo as menacing developments. In addition to the threat from Damascus, Mubarak is anxious to keep Qadhafi from outflanking Egypt to the south. To this end, Egypt has encouraged an impressive network of treaties and agreements with Sudan, supporting Numayri and rushing to offer assistance when Sudanese-Libyan enmity boils over.[7] Egypt maintains a high-profile military presence on its border with Libya and occasionally holds well-publicized maneuvers as a reminder to Libya not to get out of hand.[8] Egypt also wants to restore relations with the Saudis. It needs the financial support that Saudi Arabia can offer, and the Saudis are part of the moderate concensus that Mubarak wants to develop and strengthen.

Israel's response to the Egyptian-Arab rapprochement has been one of concern and suspicion. Egypt's policy toward Israel has been to maintain the minimum requirements of the 1979 treaty, while discouraging steps that give the appearance of a normalization of relations. Mubarak has been demonstrably less willing than Sadat to sacrifice Egypt's standing in the Arab world to resolve the remaining treaty disputes with Israel. Just as Egypt is unlikely to abrogate the treaty to regain the good graces of the Arab states, it is equally unlikely further to alienate its Arab neighbors by pursuing a policy of accommodation with Israel.[9]

Nevertheless, the resulting freeze in Egyptian-Israeli relations stems more from bilateral tensions than from Egypt's gradual return to the Arab fold. Egypt resents Israel's perception that having neutralized its most important adversary, Israel was free to pursue military adventures elsewhere. The bombing of Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor on June 6, 1981; the invasion of Lebanon; and Israel's role in the subsequent massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps (which prompted Egypt to recall its ambassador from Tel Aviv) have contributed to the deterioration of the Egyptian-Isareli relationship to the "cold peace."

While neither side can be expected to jeopardize the treaty itself, relations have declined to the point that Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir recently charged Egypt with carrying out a conscious policy of freezing relations with

Israel,[10] and Mubarak is reported to have said that Camp David was "dead." Both sides regularly accuse the other of treaty violations. In addition, the failure of the Palestinian autonomy talks seems to have convinced Egyptians that broader Arab participation is necessary to achieve a settlement of the Palestine problem. This failure has also affirmed for Egypt the value of its relations with the Arab states in its negotiations with Israel—another departure from Sadat, who, in the last years of his presidency, was generally disdainful of Arab diplomacy.

Mubarak has tried to moderate Egypt's ties with the United States. He is seeking to balance Sadat's pro-Americanism with a more aggressive component of nonalignment, the hallmark of Egypt's policy under Nasser. Indeed, Egyptians have shown increasing signs of embarrassment over Egypt's close cooperation, both political and military, with the United States. Nonetheless, Egypt seems certain to maintain close relations with the United States and Western Europe for military and economic aid, and will continue to encourage an active US role in the peace process. Mubarak is clearly less confident about Washington's seriousness of purpose and dedication to the peace process than was Sadat. The entanglement of the United States in Lebanon, followed by the US-brokered agreement between Lebanon and Israel of May 1983, and the disturbing circumstances of the withdrawal of US Marines, are important factors behind Egypt's loss of faith. Mubarak described the withdrawal as a disaster, and predicted it would cost the United States "the confidence of (its) friends in the area."[11] There is an excellent reason for Mubarak's concern: he has hitched his wagon to the US star.

Of equal importance, however, is the continuing inability of the United States, in the Egyptian view, to recognize where its interests and those of Israel diverge. Though pleased with the Reagan Administration's disapproval of efforts to shift the US Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to

Jerusalem, Egypt has found little reassurance in the general trend of US-Israeli relations. The agreement on strategic cooperation concluded in late November 1983 and the administration's refusal to adopt a tougher line on Israel's West Bank settlements are particularly irksome.

Nonetheless, it is far too early to conclude that Egypt will shift radically away from Washington as a result of the US withdrawal from Lebanon or the nature of US-Israeli relations. The United States' credibility may be in tatters, but Mubarak is a cautious politician who recognizes how much is at stake in the US-Egyptian military and economic relationship. The United States still has great importance in Egypt's defense and strategic planning and the relationship still provides handsome mutual benefits. The United States has encouraged Egypt's reintegration with the Arab world, in the hope that Egypt will regain the leadership position it lost with the signing of the treaty with Israel. Cairo, meanwhile, sees US military assistance as one element in the attainment of its regional ambitions, and US economic aid as crucial to the regime's survival. During the joint Hussein-Mubarak meetings in Washington in February, Mubarak reportedly attempted to persuade the United States that Egypt, not Jordan, should receive US funding for the establishment of a proposed Arab rapid deployment force, thus enhancing Egypt's role as "protector of the Gulf."[12]

Egyptian-US cooperation has shown its utility in other ways. At least twice in the past year the United States has dispatched AWACS planes to Egypt in the wake of Libyan threats against Sudan, bolstering Egypt's policy of restraining Qadhafi. The United States, moreover, is seen as a good counterweight to the Soviet Union, particularly in terms of the burgeoning Soviet-Syrian relationship. And the Arab Gulf states, whose appreciation of the United States does not extend to a direct US presence, also benefit from the Egyptian-American military relationship. As the Iran-Iraq war drags on, and the threat of escalation becomes more worrisome, Egypt's distant but powerful presence offers a measure of reassurance against the possibility that Iran will carry the war into the surrounding Gulf states.

Mubarak's policy toward the Soviet Union typifies his cautious approach to foreign policy. Here too, his efforts seem primarily intended to restore a degree of balance to Egypt's relations with the superpowers. The first step in this process would be the resumption of full diplomatic relations with the Soviets, whose ambassador in Cairo was expelled by Sadat in September 1981. In a recent interview, Mubarak said that "the Soviet Union is a superpower and we have no interest in antagonizing it. This does not prevent me from having special relations with the United States and ordinary relations with the Soviet Union. Relations with the Soviet Union will shortly be restored, God willing."[13]

Whatever shape the Egyptian-Soviet relationship will take, it seems likely, as Mubarak indicated, that it will not seriously undermine Egypt's ties with the United States. The Soviet Union cannot compete with the United States as a source of military and economic aid. Cairo is keenly aware the United States still has the greatest potential to exert diplomatic pressure on Israel. Egyptians are not pleased with the extent of Soviet support for their regional competitors, Libya and especially Syria. Nevertheless, improving Egyptian-Soviet relations increases Egypt's room to maneuver; diminishes the perception of an Egypt overly reliant on Washington; and provides Egypt with limited leverage over the United States. Washington takes the Egyptian-Soviet relationship very seriously; but the political, economic, and military ties that link Egypt to the West have blunted the urgency of the threat that Egypt might "defect" to Moscow.

In short, Egypt's foreign policy under Mubarak has been a cautious and deliberate effort to blend the regional commitment and non-alignment of Nassar with Sadat's "Egyptism," support for the West, and peace with Israel.

Muburak's policies have been slow to mature. They reflect his careful conclusion that the imperatives of Egypt's economic development must be addressed; that Egypt's regional responsibilities cannot be ignored, especially in terms of the Palestinian problem, that the treaty with Israel should be maintained; and that a new balance should be created in Egypt's relations with the United States and the Soviet Union.

ELEMENTS OF EGYPTIAN DEFENSE POLICY

Unlike recent foreign policy initiatives, in which Mubarak departs from Sadat's distinctive style, Egypt's military priorities, and thus its defense policies, have remained relatively consistent since the mid-1970s. The formulation of defense policy—determined by the president, as supreme commander of the armed forces, in concert with the national defense council and other advisors—is based on five general objectives. These are: modernization of the armed forces; diversification of sources of arms; strengthening the domestic military industries; defining military priorities, i.e., the deployment and roles of the armed forces; and a continuing evaluation of the impact of the military on Egyptian political life.

Modernization has as its primary aim the upgrading of Egypt's military power after several years in which defense spending remained constant and far below the record high levels of the years immediately after the 1973 war.[14] The Egyptian budget for 1983–84 includes £E 2.13 billion for defense, up substantially from £E 1.23 billion the year before.[15] Even this 73 percent increase in defense appropriations does not indicate the full extent of Egypt's modernization effort. Indeed, these funds were intended largely to cover personnel costs, not weapons procurement or the retirement of military debt.

The key to Egypt's military modernization has been the massive levels of US military aid (loans and grants) made available after the signing of the treaty with Israel in 1979. According to one reporter, Pentagon officials testified before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs in 1979 that "modernizing the equipment of the Egyptian forces and establishing close relationships between the US and the Egyptian military" were essential both to ensure Egypt's reorientation away from the Soviet Union and to enhance US security objectives.[16] Since 1981, the United States has appropriated or recommended approximately $4.82 billion in Foreign Military Sales (FMS) loans and grants.[17] US military aid is expected to remain at the level of about $1.3 billion per year over the next 3–5 years. Arms supplied under the US aid program, intended to replace obsolete Soviet equipment, include F-4 and F-16 jets; M-60 tanks, M113 armored personnel carriers, and improved Hawk anti-aircraft missiles.

Although the United States remains far and away the largest supplier of arms, Egypt is pursuing an active policy of diversifying the sources of military equipment. Egyptians have not forgotten the arms embargo imposed by the Soviet Union when the Soviets were Egypt's sole providers. The list of suppliers is impressive. Egypt has purchased aircraft and air defense missiles from France; helicopters, missile boats and hovercraft from Great Britain; frigates and missiles from Italy; trucks from Spain; and aircraft and fast patrol boats from Canada. Contacts with China and Warsaw Pact countries are continuing.

Diversification is partly the result of Egypt's determination to get the most for its defense expenditures. In addition to dealing with the Chinese, for example, the Egyptians purchased 200 Romanian TR-77 tanks at a much lower cost than US-built M-60s. The TR-77s were also easily integrated into Egypt's armored corps, whose training with Soviet T-55s—younger cousins of the TR-77—provided the necessary background.[18]

The pace and scope of Egypt's dual commitment to modernization and diversification are at times problematic. The cost of weapons purchased from the United States is enormous, with all the concomitant problems that often arise in repayment of FMS loans. Egypt does not want to borrow money commercially to pay for arms purchases, lest it affect its ability to attract economic development aid. And while diversification makes sense politically, it is a logistical nightmare. Perhaps for this reason, Egypt hopes to sell its 35 F-4s—possibly to Turkey—to reduce the number of different types of aircraft it is flying and to finance the purchase of the 80 F-16s it is committed to buy from the United States at a cost of $3 billion.

Modernization and diversification are supplemented by vigorous efforts to upgrade the domestic Egyptian arms industry. It is in this area that the Iran-Iraq war, particularly Egypt's relations with Iraq, has been of special importance to Egypt. Military sales in 1982 reached $1 billion, making weapons Egypt's second largest source of export revenue after oil.[19] Much of this trade was with Iraq, financed by subsidies from the Gulf states. Although the specific weapons and quantities sold by Egypt to Iraq are difficult to determine, most analysts agree that Egypt is providing ammunition from small arms to large shells; spare parts for Iraq's older Soviet MIGs; T-55 and possibly T-62 tanks; and artillery pieces. (Egypt is self-sufficient in ammunition production and is believed to be Iraq's major source of this crucial item.)

Whether Egypt will be able to maintain sales at these levels is open to question. Egypt's supply of spare Soviet parts is limited, and much of Egypt's arms industry is in the development stage. Plans have been advanced for domestic coproduction of advanced fighter aircraft, such as the French Mirage 2000, the McDonald Douglas F-16, or the Northrop F-20 Tigershark. However, no agreements have been concluded. Estimates that Egypt will be in a position to export its own tank by 1985 hinge on overcoming design and manufacturing obstacles. Egypt has had better luck in the production of ammunition, armored vehicles, and anti-aircraft missiles similar to the SAM-7. Despite technological difficulties, however, strengthening the domestic arms industry will remain a basic element of Egyptian defense policy, and the focus of efforts to increase foreign exchange earnings. Sales to Iraq make a valuable contribution to this process.

The priorities determining the development and role of Egypt's armed forces have remained relatively consistent since 1978. Egypt's watershed in strategic planning was not the transition from Sadat to Mubarak, but the conclusion of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in March 1979. Before that time, three priorities governed the deployment of the armed forces: the war with Israel, maintenance of internal security, and controlling regional conflict, that is, the inter-Arab dimension.[20]

Although these priorities did not ostensibly change after 1979, the peace treaty with Israel and other regional developments have led to modifications. Three changes are most evident. First, the army is playing a more significant role in internal security, especially since the imposition of a state of emergency following Sadat's assassination. (The emergency has recently been re-extended.) Second, the massive buildup of Soviet weapons in Libya, the occasional clashes between Libya and Egypt, and the generally high level of tension between the two countries have contributed to a gradual shift in the deployment of the armed forces. This shift involves thinning out units along the Suez Canal, and strengthening units along the border with Libya. In 1979, an estimated 15 percent of Egypt's combat capacity was located along this border. Defending upper Egypt, and projecting Egyptian power into the Horn of Africa to spread a defense umbrella over Sudan, against Libya, is another aspect to this shift in Egypt's strategic planning. The third change, development of a rapid deployment force, has the greatest significance for the Iran-Iraq war. Consisting of commando, paratroop and airborne units, this force has become a central element in Egyptian defense policy. It has participated in joint training maneuvers with US forces in operation Brightstar in August and September 1983, and has undertaken actual combat operations in Zaire, Libya, and Oman. If Iraq's defeat appears imminent, or if the war threatens to escalate on a serious scale into the surrounding Gulf states, the Egyptian response (if Egypt responds militarily) most likely will involve its rapid deployment units.

Whether Egypt would be prepared to commit its military to the fighting is a question that must be addressed with caution. Mubarak and other top Egyptian officials have made repeated statements that Egypt has no intention of becoming directly involved in the Iran-Iraq war.[21] Indeed, the war seems to have had no apparent impact on Egypt's defense and strategic policies. Indications that Egypt has developed a more aggressive posture toward the Gulf because of the war are difficult to isolate. It might be expected, for example, that Egypt would undertake naval deployments to strengthen its capability for intervention in the Gulf if an active role, direct or supportive, were envisioned. These shifts in Egypt's naval strategy have not taken place.[22] Alternatively, Egyptian military and civilian leaders alike recognize the dangers inherent in an Iranian victory. For this reason, Egyptian military involvement cannot be ruled out, but it is likely that the situation would have to deteriorate significantly before Egypt would take such a major step.

Despite Egypt's close strategic ties with the United States Egyptians are sensitive to the prospect of a foreign troop presence in their country. They have unpleasant memories of their experiences under the British and their alliance with the Soviets. Some Egyptians believe that their country has paid too high a price, at home and in the region, for their relationship with the United States. Egyptian officials take special pains to emphasize Egypt's sovereignty. Egypt, for example, turned down a US offer which was also opposed by Congress—to develop the Red Sea base at Ras Banas. Egypt agreed, however, to permit the United States to have "contingent access" to the base as a staging point for the US central Command to go to the aid of Arab or Muslim states that request US assistance. What does this tell us about Egypt's willingness to open its facilities for possible US intervention in the Iran-Iraq war? It is like extending an invitation to an acquaintance one hopes will not show up.

Worth recalling in this regard is President Carter's emphasis on Egypt's role in regional defense in February 1979, in particular to help protect small oil producers against foreign intervention. Sadat, for his part, declared before the US Congress in March 1979 that Egypt had "special reasons" to protect the Arab world and part of Africa from such intervention. In January 1980, Egypt's Minister of Defense Kamal Hasan Ali affirmed that Egypt was prepared to grant the United States transit facilities for its land, sea, and air forces.[23] It is unlikely that Egypt would be as forthright in repeating that offer today. Certainly it would depend on the circumstances.

The final element that must be taken into consideration in assessing Egyptian defense policy is perhaps the most important: the role of the military in Egyptian political life. Although some scholars have demonstrated the decreasing militarization of top-ranking Egyptian political circles,[24] the armed forces are still the Mubarak regime's single most important political base, as they were for Nasser and Sadat.[25] Indeed, the government's legitimacy lies primarily in its succession to the Free Officers who overthrew the monarchy in 1952. Like his predecessors, Mubarak is a military man, rising through the ranks of the air force before becoming vice president.

In addition, Mubarak is aware that the military can be a potent source of opposition, on both ideological and material grounds. To keep the armed forces satisfied, the government offers a wide range of expensive perquisites such as sophisticated weaponry and special financial privileges for military personnel—the latter to insulate the military from the failure of the Egyptian economy.[26] Despite these efforts, some tensions remain. In 1982, air force technicians reportedly went on strike to protest a regulation that would have lengthened from eight to twelve years the time needed to qualify for a commission.[27]

The military is aware that its special status can be a focus of popular criticism, residual pride over the military's performance in the 1973 war notwithstanding. This is seen in Egypt mainly as a public relations problem. Anxious to avoid the perception that they are living off the Egyptian people, the military has become extensively involved in public works projects.

EGYPT'S POLICY TOWARD THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR

Although the foundations of Egypt's Gulf policy have been in place since the start of the war, Egypt's policy toward the conflict is based fundamentally on political and economic considerations that have evolved since April 1982 in what can best be described as an Egyptian-Iraqi relationship of convenience that remains peripheral to Iraq's staying power against Iran. Essentially, Egypt saw in the war an opportunity to accelerate the process of rapprochement with the Arab world and to earn valuable foreign exchange from the sale of weapons to Iraq. In diverting Arab attention from Egypt's relationship with Israel, the war has also served as the vehicle for Egypt to return to the Arab fold as the defender of Arabism, rather than with the grudging acceptance by states which still held Egypt responsible for the treaty with Israel. Beyond this, the war has enhanced Egypt's strategic value, both within the region and for the United States.

The war has also had important ancillary benefits: it has reduced Iraq's pretensions to regional leadership as a rival of Egypt. Not all of the motives underlying Egypt's role in the conflict, however, are based on Egypt's perception of the war as an opportunity. Iran's support for militant Islamic movements is seen in Egypt as an immediate threat, one that an Iranian victory would be certain to increase. Also disturbing was the prospect that the Soviet Union would be the chief beneficiary of an extended conflict. These perceptions were important elements in Egypt's decision to take a more active role.

The healthy condition of Egyptian-Iraqi ties is of relatively recent origin. Although Sadat sold Egyptian arms to Iraq, and Sadat's enmity toward Khomeini was well known, Iraq's position as a leading rejectionist state, deeply opposed to Egypt's peace treaty with Israel, precluded substantive cooperation while Sadat was alive. Egypt remained generally detached from the conflict. Mubarak initially continued this policy, but as Iran gained the upper hand in the fighting, opportunities increased for Egypt to benefit from greater involvement.

From the point of view of the Gulf states, the conditions requiring an Egyptian role were not fully in place until Iranian offensives in 1982 broke the stalemate that had prevailed on the battlefield the previous year. During this extended stalemate, the Arab Gulf states experienced an unusual degree of influence. With the two major powers in the region battling one another, rather than extending their power at the expense of their weaker neighbors, the Gulf states enjoyed greater latitude to exercise diplomatic initiative and political independence. During this period the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was formed; the Fez peace plan was announced; and an active Saudi role in the Lebanese crisis was undertaken. Once the military balance shifted in Iran's favor, however, the Gulf states lost the room to maneuver. They became much more aware of the need for a regional protector, especially one whose distance from the arena of conflict offered assurance to the states in the Gulf that they were not simply opening the door to another ambitious regional power.

Despite the anticipated benefits, Egypt's leaders proceeded cautiously in establishing their relationship with Iraq, and have refused to be pulled in beyond clearly defined limits. Within the framework of arms sales, expressions of support for Iraq's cause and the encouragement of a negotiated settlement, Egypt has rejected the role of an aggressive partisan on Iraq's behalf and seems determined to avoid direct involvement in the fighting. Egypt's hesitation has three primary causes. First, Egyptians are well aware of Iran's strategic value and the possible dangers of alienating Iran from its Arab neighbors over the longer term. Second, Egyptians operate on the assumption that a settlement eventually will be reached, and that the most productive role for other Arab states in this context is to insure Iraq's survival. In this way, Iraq can preserve its ability to negotiate from a position of strength and thus demonstrate to Iran the futility of intransigence. Finally, the Egyptians have not forgotten Nasser's disastrous adventure in Yemen in the 1960s and have no interest in repeating it.

Mubarak outlined Egypt's intention to maintain a policy of balance and reason in a recent interview:

> I want to say that from the beginning Egypt has not supported the war between Iraq and Iran, which are two Islamic countries between which there was friendship. I hope we have a role to mediate between Iran and Iraq. I don't know the reason that caused Iran to adopt a certain stand toward us, although we do not help Iraq to the extent that allows offensive military operations to be launched against Iran. We support negotiations and mediation for solving problems. We have never given Iraq an offensive weapon with which to strike at Iran. This

> has never happened. Up to this moment, we have no military forces in Iraq, as some think. We have expertise in war. In wars we cannot send an incomplete force. If we want to send a force to Iraq we must send a complete force . . . This has not occurred because it is not in our interest that fighting should continue between Iraq and Iran. It is not in our interest that the resources of these countries go down the drain on (sic) destruction.[28]

Four points are worthy of note. Mubarak offered Egypt's aid as mediator in the conflict; he refused to endorse an all-out victory by either combatant; he avoided the strident denunciations of Iran that characterized Sadat's statements; and he went to some lengths to downplay Egypt's military ties with Iraq. These four elements constitute the basic thrust of Egyptian policy. Clearly, Mubarak recognizes that whatever the short-term opportunities the conflict affords, Egypt's long-term ability to pursue its interests in the region would not be enhanced by the emergence of either a "victorious Iran or Iraq bestriding the Gulf like a political, military and economic mini-superpower."[29] This measured approach has won the appreciation of the Gulf states, and it has created a foundation of shared perceptions that Egypt has used to increase its influence in the Gulf.

EGYTPIAN-IRANIAN RELATIONS

Despite Mubarak's assurances that Egypt has not provided offensive weapons to Iraq and that Egypt seeks a negotiated settlement, relations between Egypt and Iran have not improved since Mubarak became president. The initiative in Iranian-Egyptian ties rests with Iran. Indeed, the hostility between the two countries is less a product of the war with Iraq than the result of the impact of the Iranian revolution. For Iran's clerical leaders, Egypt under Sadat was the embodiment of all that was wrong with the Middle East; a bastion of secularism and pro-Americanism.

Support for the Palestinians and for the "liberation of Jerusalem," hostility toward the United States and the export of the Islamic revolution have been the cornerstones of the Iranian regime's foreign policy. In each of these areas, Egypt's outlook was seen as especially treacherous. Not only did Egypt sign a peace treaty with the detested Zionist state, it engaged in strategic cooperation with the "Great Satan," and vigorously monitored—then suppressed—Islamic militants at home. But Egypt's greatest offense was the open reception of the Shah, whose presence in Cairo was seen as a calculated insult. (The Shah's remains are interred in the Rifa'i Mosque, which also houses the graves of Egypt's last royal family.) In turn, Sadat's disdain for the new regime in Tehran was equally blatant, and intensely hostile rhetoric flowed from both capitals. (It could be argued that Sadat's initial offers of support for Iraq were based primarily on his antipathy for the Iranian government and only secondarily on his desire to force the rejectionist Iraqis to approach him openly for assistance.)

Although Mubarak has toned down the level of rhetoric, the fundamental differences between Egypt and Iran have not diminished. Most recently, Iran harshly condemned Egypt's readmission to the Islamic Conference Organization.[30] For this reason, it is highly unlikely that Egypt will be able to play the mediator's role that Mubarak described. Nonetheless, the war remains worrisome to Egypt's leaders. Foreign Minister Kamal Hassan Ali, for example, ordered his ministry's standing Political Committee into permanent session to monitor the course of the war.[31] In any event, Egyptians understand full well that the war probably will produce "no conqueror and no conquered."[32] Although they are anxious for its end, they are pessimistic about the prospects for peace. Even an end to the fighting, however, is unlikely to bring about a reconciliation between Iran and Egypt. That development must await a cooling of the rhetoric of the Islamic Republic and a modification of its status as role model for militant Islamic states throughout the region. For this reason, Egypt's policy toward the war has largely become a factor of its relations with Iraq.

EGYPTIAN-IRAQI RELATIONS

In contrast to Egypt's relations with Iran, Egyptian-Iraqi ties have been deeply affected by the war. Historically, Baghdad and Cairo have represented the competing poles of an adversarial relationship. To evaluate the current state of Egyptian-Iraqi relations, it is necessary to review briefly the evolution of this volatile relationship.

Between the Egyptian revolution of 1952 and the Iraqi revolution of 1958, Egyptian-Iraqi relations were caught up in the struggle between Arab nationalism and colonialism, between Arab socialism and monarchy. Great Britain's presence in Iraq was particularly irritating to the Free Officers who had struggled against British rule in Egypt. Iraq's entry into the Baghdad Pact in 1958 (only two years after the invasion of the Sinai by British, French, and Israeli forces) was seen as a serious blow to Nasser's policies of nonalignment and pan-Arabism.[33]

Thus, when General Qasim overthrew the monarchy and the regime of Nuri al-Said in the bloody coup of July 1958, expectations were high in Egypt that Iraq would henceforth model itself on Egyptian lines and assume its rightful place in the pan-Arab pantheon. In fact, Iraq initially joined Syria and Egypt in negotiations for the creation of a United Arab Republic. Partly as a result of the tensions that grew out of those negotiations, however, and partly because of Iraq's unwillingness to accept Egypt as the leading Arab state, Egyptian-Iraqi relations soured.[34] For the remainder of Nasser's lifetime, except for brief interludes, as in 1963 when the idea of an Egyptian-Iraqi union was again under consideration,[35] relations between the two states were distant, if not outright hostile. Even Iraq's participation in an Egyptian-Iraqi joint military command in 1964 and later, in 1967, in a mutual defense pact with Egypt and Jordan, did not overcome the mutual distrust that characterized relations between these two states.

Under President Sadat—and up to 1978–79—Egyptian-Iraqi relations were much less volatile. Sadat's moderation of Nasser's pan-Arab claims created a more constructive environment for Egyptian-Iraqi cooperation. But the improvement also reflected the growing stability of the state system in the Middle East, as well as the general disillusionment with the politics of the pre-1967 period that followed Israel's victory in the June War. As a result of these changes, Egypt and Iraq moved closer together in the early 1970s, relations reaching a high point in 1975. Despite differences over Egypt's signing of the Sinai disengagement agreement, Saddam Hussein made his first official visit to Cairo in May of that year. That visit followed the conclusion of the Iranian-Iraqi accord in Algiers, which divided sovereignty in the Shatt al-Arab waterway and resolved other bilateral issues. Saddam Hussein praised Sadat for his role in the negotiations with Iran and invited Sadat to visit Baghdad.[36] Sadat was only too pleased to comply and made the first visit by the Egyptian leader to Iraq.[37] During that visit, Iraq made a "contribution to the Egyptian people" of one million tons of crude oil.[38] Sadat later entertained ambitions of mediating in Iraq's disputes with Kuwait and Syria.[39] Tensions between the two states increased as a result of Egypt's policy toward Israel; but, as late as July 1977, Iraq offered to mediate the dispute between Egypt and Libya.[40]

The tenor of relations changed once Sadat's determination to recognize Israel and negotiate a peace treaty became apparent. Iraqi attacks escalated following Sadat's trip to Jerusalem in November 1977, and Iraq hosted the Baghdad Conference in 1979 that imposed the Arab boycott on Egypt. Iraq's hostility reflected, in part, genuinely held opposition to Egypt's dramatic departure from the Arab consensus. But it also reflected Saddam Hussein's perception that Egypt's isolation—in conjunction with the turmoil in Iran—afforded an unprecedented opportunity to attain Iraq's "rightful" position as the preeminent Arab state. Leadership of the rejectionist camp was seen in Baghdad as the vehicle for achieving this goal. As a result, Iraq pursued both the economic and political boycotts of Egypt with great vigor. The subsequent alienation of Egypt and Iraq, largely a factor of the personality of Anwar al-Sadat, was irreconcilable during Sadat's remaining years in office.

On assuming the presidency, Mubarak immediately set out to mend Egypt's Arab fences. Virtually his first step was to curtail the vitriolic rhetoric that had emanated from Cairo under Sadat. The Arab states, in turn, regarded Mubarak's presidency as an opportunity. However, it was not until March–April 1982 that the Egyptian-Iraqi rift began to heal. The war was a crucial factor in this process. After Iran mounted a major offensive in March 1982, Iraq dispatched a military delegation to seek higher levels of Egyptian military support. This visit was widely interpreted at the time as signaling the beginning of Egypt's return to the Arab world.[41] Egyptian officials, however, were cautious in their assessment of its implications; the local press did not publicize the visit, the officials would not comment on it publicly. Nonetheless, the visit symbolized the starting point of a warmer Egyptian-Iraqi relationship. To understand how far this relationship has come since then, it is necessary to review three discrete dimensions of Egyptian-Iraqi ties: political, economic, and military. In each of these areas, Egypt has derived substantial benefits.

In the political arena, Iraq has moderated its opposition to Egypt's treaty with Israel, softened its stand on the Palestinian problem in general, and played an active role in support of Egypt's reintegration into the Arab world. These moves have come about with very little Egyptian movement in return. Despite Egypt's failure to become an aggressive advocate of Iraq, Baghdad played a key role in Egypt's readmission to the ICO. Moreover, Iraq's First Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yassin Ramadan has publicly called for Egypt's return to the Arab League, a far more important forum for Egypt than the ICO.[42]

On the issue of the Palestinian problem and Egyptian-Israeli relations, the change has been dramatic. Although Iraq occasionally calls on Egypt to renounce its agreements with Israel,[43] Iraq's rejectionist positions generally have been replaced by a more sympathetic view of Egypt's situation and greater Iraqi flexibility in considering a solution to the Palestinian problem. In an important interview with the Cairo newspaper *al-Ahram,* Saddam Hussein expressed Iraq's support for the "Jordanian option" for the West Bank.[44] Ramadan has gone so far as to say that "there is no conflict between the Arab nation and Egypt . . . (as) evident in Egypt's attitude toward the Palestinian problem and the Iran-Iraq war."[45] The new political relationship also has been characterized by extensive official visits by high-ranking delegations between the two countries, like the 24–26 March 1984 visit to Baghdad by Egypt's Foreign Minister Kamal Hasan Ali. Saddam Hussein has extended an open invitation to Mubarak to visit Iraq, and Mubarak has accepted in principle.

As impressive as the improvement of political relationships has been, it is in the area of economic ties that Egypt has the most at stake. Iraqi-Egyptian trade has expanded greatly with the conclusion of several new economic cooperation agreements in recent months. Trade delegations have exchanged visits, and the trade centers in Cairo and Baghdad were reopened following the signing of a major trade protocol in August 1983.[46] Actual trade figures have increased slowly and have not reached major proportions except for military sales. However, the foundations for an expansion of trade have been steadily enhanced.[47]

Of far greater significance is the economic role played by Egyptian workers in Iraq. Estimates of the number of Egyptians in Iraq vary from a low of 400,000—put forward by some Iraqis—to a high of two million suggested during recent interviews with Egyptians in Baghdad. Most sources agree, however, that this work force represents about 40 percent of Egyptians working abroad. US State Department analysts estimate that the current figure has declined since the beginning of the war from about 1.2–1.3 million to around 1 million.[48] Some sources attribute this decline to slowdowns in Iraqi construction projects and to the allegation that Egyptian workers are occasionally conscripted into the Iraqi armed forces. Remittances from these workers alone may finance as much as 30 percent of Egypt's merchandise deficit.[49] In any case, the Egyptian presence is ubiquitous and noticeable. Flights between Cairo and Baghdad are fully booked even a month in advance. Egyptian Arabic is widely heard in Baghdad, the Ishtar Sheraton Hotel restaurant features a weekly "Egyptian Food Night," and Egyptian workers carried placards and filled trucks in the Labor Day parade on May 1, 1984.

Transfers of funds into Egypt nearly doubled in 1982–83, rising from $580 million the year before to just over $1 billion.[50] There is little question that the improvement in Egyptian-Iraqi relations played a major role in this dramatic increase. During the Arab boycott, Egyptian remittances handled by Iraqi banks were severely restricted, encouraging the use of unofficial channels by Egyptian workers and producing a correspondingly low level of official net transfers. The economic accord of August 1983 eased these restrictions and reestablished official transfer procedures, although Egyptian workers in Iraq now can repatriate only 60 percent of their earnings. While *al-Ahram*'s projected increase in transfers of $400 million a month as a result of the August agreement probably is overstated, the amount has risen significantly.[51] Despite the economic slowdown in Arab oil-producing states, Egypt's Minister of Economy and Foreign

Trade reported that Egypt's transfers rose to $120 million per month in the first six months of 1983–84, and could reach a total of $1.4 billion for the fiscal year.[52]

Egyptian workers are active at all levels and in all sectors of the Iraqi economy, but they predominate in a few key areas. One of these is oil production. An Iraqi trade union official estimated that Egyptians constituted up to 60 percent of the workers in this industry.[53] In total numbers, however, the largest population of Egyptians is found in agriculture. Not all of these are recent arrivals; many Egyptians have lived as farmers in Iraq for nearly a decade. Recently, the Iraqi government has actively solicited agricultural workers, offering incentives to settle in Iraq as part of the government's policy to decrease dependence on food imports and to free Iraqi manpower to fight in the war.[54]

In the area of military relations, one question is of particular interest to Western analysts: whether Egyptian forces have played, or are likely to undertake, an active combat role in the Iran-Iraq war. Indications are that, in keeping with Mubarak's assertion rejecting such a possibility, Egypt has not contributed forces to Iraq's war effort. At this stage in the fighting, the Iraqis are probably reluctant to engage foreign volunteers. Their experience with the logistical problems that have accompanied outside troops, notably the Sudanese contingent, and the recent successes of Iraq's defensive strategy have dimmed enthusiasm for this option.

Nonetheless, it is probable that Egyptian advisors are present, although it is uncertain as to what levels and in what capacities. Credible reports persist that an unknown number of Egyptian military officers are serving with the Iraqi armed forces as a result of Egypt's policy of "selective emigration" that allows officers to take early retirement and go to Iraq as consultants and advisors, or even to play combat roles in certain military specialities. Knowledgeable Egyptians also have referred to the presence in Iraq of numerous "assessment teams" composed of Egyptian officers on active duty who meet with their Iraqi counterparts at the front to review operations and make suggestions. Iraqi interlocutors at a recent conference in Baghdad on the Iran-Iraq war and its international ramifications were full of praise for the Egyptian contribution to the Iraqi war effort. At the conference itself, Egypt received very little criticism from Iraqi party officials and academicians for having signed the Camp David Accords and the treaty with Israel. The honeymoon clearly is continuing.

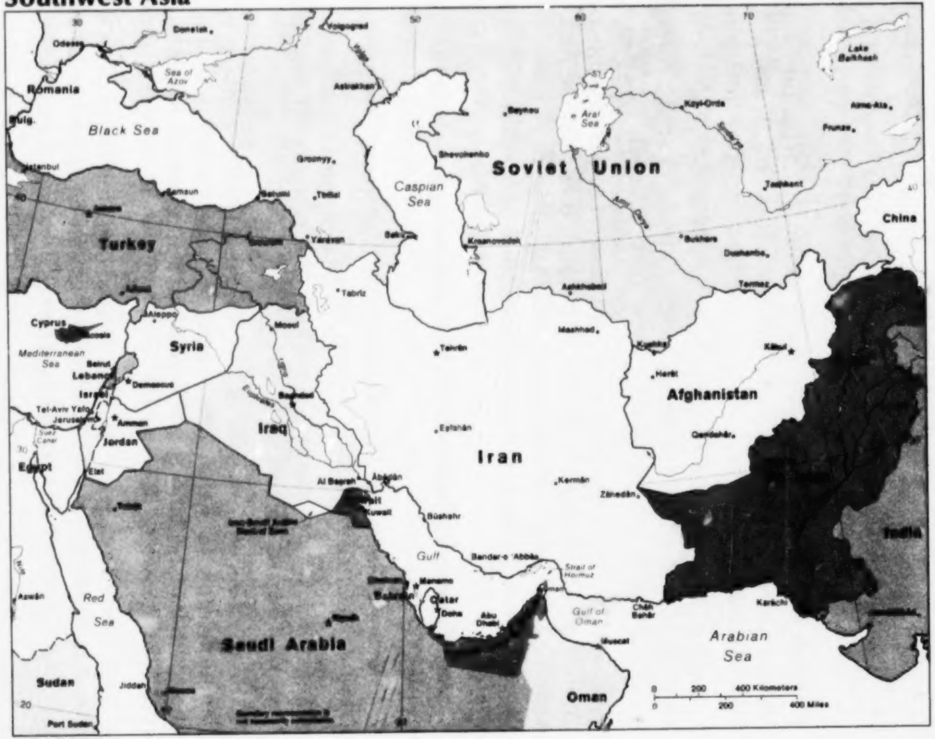
CONCLUSION

The major impact of the Iran-Iraq war on Egyptian foreign policy has been the acceleration of Egypt's reintegration with the Arab world and the increase of its importance for the Gulf Arab states. Of equal significance are the economic benefits that Egypt derives from cash sales of arms to Iraq and from the remittances of so many Egyptians working there. In terms of defense and strategic policy, the effect of the war has been less significant, although the war at least has rekindled interest in a broader Egyptian political role in the Gulf. Egyptian military leaders may have developed contingency plans to deal with a possible Iranian victory, but Egypt's defense priorities continue to be defined by its traditional concerns with Libya, Israel, and internal security.

Changes in the Egyptian-Iraqi relationship may suggest to Egyptian planners two different scenarios. In the first, the war is seen as having forced Iraq's leaders to mature and to dampen their ambitions for regional hegemony. Similarly, they have begun to appreciate the value of inter-Arab cooperation. As a result, Egyptian-Iraqi ties will remain relatively smooth in the years following a settlement of the war, building on economic interdependence to manage interstate competition within a framework of moderate, non-aligned policies. The second scenario sees current Egyptian-Iraqi relations as a departure from an historically adversarial coexistence, a relationship driven by expediency that will collapse into acrimony when the war ends.

As with other aspects of Egypt's Gulf policy, whatever scenario comes to pass is likely to be less a consequence of the war itself than of the ramifications of inter-Arab tensions that have always played an important role in the history of the Middle East. This phenomenon defines Egypt's part in the history of the Middle East. As the leading Arab state and the major Arab military power, Egypt is bound to be affected by the war. Its involvement, however, has been predicated on factors that are largely external to the conflict, in particular the continuing ramifications of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty. In this sense, Egypt is ill-equipped to play a major role in the conflict and has developed what it regards as a sound policy for maximizing the diplomatic and economic opportunities presented by the war while minimizing the obvious risks. In the final analysis, however, Egypt is not a decisive element in the Gulf equation, militarily or politically, and is not likely to become one in the years ahead.

Southwest Asia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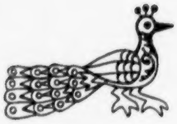
Chapter 3



THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR: IMPLICATIONS FOR US POLICY

Harold H. Saunders

THE STATES IN THE GULF

What is at stake in the Persian Gulf today is the nature of the security system that will be established there. Implicit in that statement, of course, is the well-established interest of the United States, and particularly of its allies, in the steady flow of oil from the Gulf.

In discussing the "security system" we are talking about the arrangement of regional states and the big powers' relationship to them, which will affect the stability of states in the Gulf. That stability, in turn, will affect the oil flow. To discuss that system in Washington is not to imply that the United States has the capacity to determine what the system will be, but to lay out considerations which may influence how the United States postures itself toward the actors in that system and, to the extent possible, throws its influence toward one arrangement or another.

The question of what security system will be established is pointedly relevant in the mid-1980s. The answer has been in doubt since the 1979 collapse of the Shah's regime in Iran, and by mid-decade the issues are sharper and more far-reaching than ever.

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROBLEM IN THE 1970S

Before turning to the war between Iran and Iraq which began in September, 1980, it is important to put the situation of the mid-1980s in a decade's perspective. The roots of the present US posture toward the Gulf security system reach back into the pre-war period.

When the British government announced in the late 1960s that it planned to retrench its position in the Gulf, the United States faced two choices. One was to assume the British role of protecting the security of states in the Gulf. The other was to work out some other system that would put us in a less exposed position while enhancing our involvement.

The choice was presented to President Nixon at a time when the nation was suffering the disillusionments of America's extended role in Southeast Asia. President Nixon had laid out the essence of what came to be called the "Nixon Doctrine." The "doctrine" held that the United States should no longer assume direct responsibility for preserving security in all corners of the world but would rather strengthen regional actors to play the primary role in assuring the stability of their area.

In the Gulf this took the form of what came to be referred to as the "twin pillars" policy of trying to build a security system in the Gulf based on cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia. In reality, this resulted in a policy of helping the Shah with extensive military sales to build Iran's military capacity since, at that stage, Saudi Arabia was still in the earlier stages of developing a rounded military capability. Political relationships between the leaders of Iran and Saudi Arabia were not close, although they were correct. Nevertheless, the United States attempted to preserve and develop a picture of cooperation between the two while working closely with Iran to advance its capability as rapidly as possible.

The collapse of the Shah's regime in Iran in late 1978 and early 1979 changed the picture dramatically. Not only was the new regime of Ayatollah Khomeini sharply suspicious of the United States; its philosophy called for extending the Islamic revolution into neighboring states to unseat traditional regimes there. The Iranian revolution posed two problems for the United States. One was the threat of similar social and political upheaval in the Arab states of the Gulf. The other was the possibility of direct Iranian attacks across the Gulf.

As the trouble mounted in Iran, the United States gave increased attention within its own military establishment to developing the capability to deploy military forces to that part of the world. That involved both the strengthening of US forces and facilities in the area where they could stage and operate. In 1979, that included not only the further development of the base at Diego Garcia in the southern Indian Ocean. It also involved the negotiation of agreements with the governments of Oman, Kenya, Somalia, and Egypt to arrange for US access to facilities in those countries should they be needed to establish a communications and supply route to the Gulf in an emergency requiring US deployments there.

Right from the start, US military planners recognized the eventual need, if forces ever had to be deployed in the Gulf, of stationing US combat support aircraft somewhere in that area. Given the unwillingness of Saudi Arabia to make formal arrangements for US bases on Saudi soil, discussions proceeded in Washington about the possibility of assuring that new Saudi facilities would be built in such a way as to be able to handle US forces and to store pre-positioned supplies should the Saudis feel in the future that their security required deployment of US forces.

At the end of 1979, the Iranian takeover of the US Embassy in Tehran created a crisis which caused the Carter Administration to deploy into the Indian Ocean naval forces which had not previously been stationed there for more than brief visits. At various points in the following year, two carrier task forces were on station in those waters. Deployed in reaction to a particular crisis, they did not reflect systematic thought about the overall mission of US forces in that area.

Against that background, the Soviet Union in the latter half of 1979 was examining closely the possibility of military intervention into Afghanistan to support the Communist regime which had taken over there in April 1978. The Taraki regime was increasingly unable to deal with popular resistance to the consolidation of government authority in the areas outside the main cities. Soviet military forces moved into Afghanistan on December 27, 1979. In the wake of that action, President Carter in his State of the Union Address on 23 January 1980, said: "An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force." These words formed the essence of what came to be called the "Carter Doctrine." This policy statement provided the basic context for development of the Rapid Deployment Force and further preparations for the possible deployment of that force. Because of the hostage crisis, enhanced US naval forces were already in the Indian Ocean and remained there through much of the following year.

The Iran-Iraq war broke out during September, 1980, against the background of a breakdown in the regional security system of the 1970s and a significant Soviet military move into the larger region. It was in the context of that war that President Reagan later reaffirmed the Carter Doctrine, continued the buildup of the Rapid Deployment Force, and established the new Central Command (CENTCOM) on January

1, 1983. President Reagan expanded the Carter Doctrine to include: (1) a US interest in dealing with any threat of any kind to the Saudi regime and (2) readiness to keep open the Strait of Hormuz if the Iranians should try to stop shipping through that waterway. The President's statement that the United States could not tolerate "another Iran" in Saudi Arabia was probably a general statement of feeling rather than a precise statement of policy, but any statement by the President will be read in some quarters as a policy statement.

THE SOVIET THREAT

The Carter Doctrine had focused primarily on an attempt by an "outside power" to gain control of the Gulf. Concern stimulated by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan caused American planners to think more precisely about the exact forms a Soviet threat to gain control of the Gulf might take. Planners considered three possible situations which the United States might face.

First was the most obvious possibility of a direct move by Soviet military forces into Iran and toward the Gulf, either from Afghanistan or across the Iranian-Soviet border. While a majority of Washington analysts regarded this as a worst case and least likely scenario in the immediate future, planners could not ignore it. Even if the Soviets did not intend to make the political decision to move towards the Gulf, a possible US response to all eventualities had to be considered.

A second scenario could be built around political changes in Tehran that might follow the death of Khomeini. Among the possibilities was the coming to power of a government which included leftist elements that would be regarded in Washington as responsive to Moscow, even though they might not, in fact, be clearly identified as elements of the Communist Party in Iran. The dilemma posed for the United States would be reflected in a scenario in which such a government, seemingly responsive to Moscow, in some way tried to close off shipment of oil to the United States or its Allies or to shut down critical Saudi production or export facilities.

A third scenario could assume the breakdown of central authority in Iran following Khomeini's death and the establishment of a Soviet puppet regime supported by Soviet volunteers in a breakaway province such as Azerbaijan or even, eventually, in the oil-producing province of Khuzestan.

US contingency thinking raised two important questions about how to view the Soviet threat: First, was the question of whether and how the United States could underwrite the Carter Doctrine commitment with the necessary military force. Most of the planning as to these scenarios in the late 1970s had to focus on the consequences of deploying a small symbolic force to the areas of Iran adjacent to the Persian Gulf as a "trip wire" while relying on US moves against the Soviet Union in other areas as the main deterrent. The United States could not at that time deploy enough force in a sufficiently short period of time to meet a large invading Soviet force as a serious military match. Present hopes are to be able by 1987 to project four or five divisions (80–100,000 troops) into the region within a month. but in 1980 the contingency planner's problem was how to demonstrate clearly to the Soviet Union that developments such as those described in the illustrative scenarios would be a cause for the United States to respond on a global basis.

Second, was the perennial problem in US political life of defining the Soviet threat itself. On the one hand, US planners could not ignore the possibility of a conventional Soviet military move toward the Gulf and the President's need for an available US military response. At the same time, many regional analysts pointed out that the more likely near-term threat to US interests would arise from instability within the region itself. The Iranian revolution stemming from Iranian causes was cited as the prime example in recent memory. Often US policymakers have tended to see the Soviets at the roots of such local upheavals and have made the mistake of assuming that the problem was an East-West problem rather than an indigenous one of dealing with the political, social, and economic dynamics of local change, so putting emphasis on the wrong kinds of responses.

That issue had become an important part of the difference between policy analysts and the Reagan Administration by 1981. The discussion had begun in the late 1970s, but the new administration's tendency to define regional problems in East-West terms sharpened it.

CHANGING DEFINITIONS OF THE PROBLEM

Against that background, it is useful to note as the basis for considering the United States' policy options that definition of the problem has become increasingly complicated since 1979.

Before 1979, we thought of the problem in terms of maintaining a broad political base from which any threat to the flow of oil from local instability could be contained. Through most of the 1970s, the idea was that Iranian-Saudi cooperation would provide that base. The US role was to help strengthen the principal parties to that cooperation and to work bilaterally with other states in the area to improve their capacity to maintain their own security. On occasions, the United States supported Jordan as another source of training and military help in dealing with internal or border security problems. The Carter Administration continued to discuss with the Sadat government in Egypt ways in which the United States and Egypt could work on a complementary basis to address the strategic threat to the Gulf region.

Since 1979, while that problem remains—albeit in sharply changed form because of the break in US relations with Iran—another major problem has been added within the Gulf itself. That is the protection of states on the Arab side of the Gulf from the revolutionary regime in Iran. The Iranian revolution added two important dimensions to the problem.

First was the presence in Tehran of an activist revolutionary regime with uncertain but seemingly wide appeal to revolutionaries throughout the area who turned to Islamic fundamentalism as their political base. Coupled with this appeal in Tehran was the explicit call by the Khomeini regime for the overthrow of traditional regimes in the Gulf states. In some of those states with a significant Shia minority, the mounting drumbeat of calls for action from Tehran caused concern about internal stability. This was particularly true in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia where the government responded promptly and decisively to early signs of unrest. When the Iran-Iraq war broke out, it became an active issue when the Iranian regime appealed to Shia Iraqis to rise against the Iraqi regime. An abortive coup attempt in Bahrain was traced back to Iranian subversive support.

In addition to the hard-to-define threat of internal unrest, particularly since the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war, the threat of Iranian air attacks against Arab oil facilities and of political terrorist bombings has become a realistic cause of concern. Iraqi export facilities were damaged at the beginning of the war. Bombings took place in Kuwait in December, 1983. Each of the Gulf states helping Iraq financially has had cause to fear Iranian air strikes.

These changes in the nature of the threat have been reflected in the response to the problem of the regional states themselves. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was formed first for internal security reasons, then for economic cooperation, and eventually for cooperation in mutual defense. It was in the context of early Saudi concern over Iranian air attacks that the AWACS were first deployed to Saudi Arabia and then eventually sold to Saudi Arabia. The possibility of Iranian attacks seemed to increase as the Iran-Iraq war threatened to escalate in 1983 and early in 1984. Some of the states on the Arab side of the Gulf listened carefully to the United States as emissaries discussed how the United States might act in their interest if there were such Iranian attacks or an Iranian attempt to close off shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.

The Gulf states have recognized the threat of both subversion and direct military attack from Iran; they have also recognized the complexities of relying on the United States as part of their defense even against overt Iranian attack. If they were openly and directly attacked by Iranian military forces, there is little question that they would turn to the United States forces for their ultimate defense. Most of them realize that US forces need some prior planning and even prepositioning of some equipment and supplies if they are to operate on short notice so far from home. At the same time, they know that openly cooperating with the US military when no threat has materialized will give their political opponents an issue for attacking them politically because there is strong sentiment in the Gulf against drawing the superpowers into the area. This is especially true when the United States is seen as uncritically backing Israel in all that it does to deny the Palestinians an opportunity for an act of self-determination. The Gulf states' political concern about being seen to be cooperating with the United States openly has increased the difficulty of concrete common contingency planning.

If joint planning against overt military attack has been difficult, planning for the threat of subversion has been even more difficult. Cooperation among the Gulf states really began around concerns about (internal) security. It has been difficult for US planners to relate to the internal security concerns of the GCC or to the even more difficult problem of potential instability generated by (internal) causes, or for the top levels of the US government to incorporate this dimension in their definition of the problem.

As the Iran-Iraq war wore on, the problem was more sharply posed for the United States. As long as the war seemed to remain a stand-off, the United States could continue to assume that the neutralization of Iran and Iraq would still leave a political base for a US role in keeping the oil flowing. In the summer of 1983 when Iraq notified Washington of its concern to maintain economic stability through a prolonged war of attrition, the US government had to face the consequences of a possible Iranian "victory." Most policy analysts did not think it likely that the Khomeini government would succeed in toppling the Iraqi regime and bringing a Shia government to power. Nevertheless, they had to point out that a government in Baghdad which developed a working relationship with Tehran (and Damascus) would markedly change the political environment in the Gulf.

By early 1984, the problem in Washington came to be defined more in terms of helping to develop a strong base on the Arab side of the Gulf to fend off any Iranian threat to the flow of oil and, in the background of American minds, as a foundation for any possible contingency steps the United States might feel it necessary to take if some new Soviet move seemed to be materializing. This was not articulated in any formal refinement of previous policy declarations, but US officials traveling in the Gulf in late 1983 and early 1984 made known US concern about the consequences of an Iranian victory. They made this clear in discussions with Gulf governments on what actions the United States might take if they were attacked.

The longer term and perhaps more subtle issue for US policy planners emerged. Would the United States define the problem assuming the continued division of the Gulf along Arab-Persian lines? Or would US policy thinkers at least leave the door open to eventual restoration of a relationship with Iran, and an Iranian return to cooperation in assuring the stability of the Gulf?

The issue may remain an academic one as long as the Khomeini regime continues in Iran. But it is not entirely without operational significance. For instance, to include Iran would probably place more emphasis on discussions with countries like Pakistan, that still have influence in Tehran, to seek out leaders in Iran who could be persuaded to see a longer term Iranian interest in collaboration with a broad range of anti-Soviet forces in the area, rather than simply leaving Iran isolated to its own devices. Taking this approach would not assume any early prospect of success. It requires ending the Iran-Iraq war and reestablishing diplomatic relations with Iran, rather than leaving that country as simply an object for quarantine. To say this does not diminish the need to deal with the near-term Iranian threat.

THREE STAGES OF THE US STRATEGIC POSTURE

Now let us look at three stages in which the Iran-Iraq war has affected the strategic posture of the United States.

Initially, the US position was colored in part by the fact that early negotiations had begun for the release of the US hostages in Tehran. As it happened, the problem was not a major one because the natural US position was to oppose Iraqi military intervention in Iran as inconsistent with principles of the United Nations Charter. While the administration, for domestic political reasons, could not adopt a pro-Iranian stand, the natural US position was not against Iran and, therefore, the administration sought to avoid additional complications in the efforts to gain the release of the hostages. As it happened, the Iranian minister who came to New

York to make Iran's case at the United Nations found little sympathy. Even the non-aligned nations saw Iran's hostage-taking as damaging principles of international order, which the non-aligned nations depend on more than the great powers.

Second, because of the preoccupation with the release of the hostages and then the almost total absence of a relationship with Iran on any other issue, the Carter Administration and subsequently the Reagan Administration felt that efforts to mediate in the conflict could only be left to Islamic or neutral parties. Even when others tried and failed, the United States judged that a low level of conflict on the Iran-Iraq border did not immediately threaten US interests and could be left to the mediation of others. This was a period that has been described as one of deliberate neglect.

In the latter half of 1983, the US posture changed. Iraqi officials visited Washington and told the Reagan Administration that the closure of the Gulf to Iraqi oil exports had seriously hurt the Iraqi economy and that Iraq would, therefore, need to increase the cost of the war for Iran in an effort to press Iran to bring the war to a close. Following the delivery of that message in Washington in August 1983, Iraq acquired the Super Etendard combat aircraft with the Exocet missiles and proceeded to launch attacks against shipping in the Gulf during November and December to demontrate the enhanced Iraqi military capability.

The United States sent two diplomatic emissaries to Iraq, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Placke and Ambassador Donald Rumsfeld, to show concern about the possible defeat of Iraq and to discuss US contingency planning in the event Iran should attack the Arab states. Their message was that the United States did not want to see an Iranian victory. The net effect of Iraq's efforts improved its own position militarily and created the impression of a US tilt toward Iraq. As the Iranians seemed to be responsible for such terrorist attacks as the bombing of US Marine headquarters in Beirut and the December bombings in Kuwait, the US posture became one of dramatizing the Iranian threat and positioning itself to contain it. President Reagan, responding to Iranian threats to close the Strait of Hormuz, made it clear that the US naval forces, in collaboration with the British and French, would take steps to keep the Strait open.

Iraq also bought more time to build on its diplomatic initiative by improving its economic position. Its late-1983 military actions seemed to encourage Iraq's Arab supporters in the Gulf to increase the flow of financial aid. European creditors reached agreements with Iraq to stretch out Iraq's debt repayment and thereby increased the credit available to Iraq. At the same time, Iraq stretched out some of its development projects and decreased its import costs by some forty percent. Finally, Iraq entered negotiations with Turkey, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia to increase the export of oil through pipelines. Despite these improvements in Iraq's ability to weather economically Iran's war of attrition, Iraq had not found a way to force an Iranian decision to end the war and still faced larger numbers of Iranian troops on the battle lines.

MILITARY QUESTIONS

As the war dragged on, the United States continued to face fundamental questions about its military posture in this area. It had declared that vital US interests were at stake. President Carter had stated that the United States would resist by military means an effort by "any outside force" to "gain control" of the "Gulf region." President Reagan expanded that commitment to include US involvement in dealing with instability stemming from regional causes. Neither administration had the capacity to meet all possible contingencies, nor did either fully think through what those commitments involved.

The first problem involves a number of questions about possible uses of the Rapid Deployment Force even in conventional military situations. Dealing with a Soviet move toward the Gulf could be discussed by US military planners in conventional military ways. It was even possible to discuss air or naval defense of the Arab states of the Gulf against Iranian attack or countering an Iranian effort to close the Strait with US naval forces. But how well do the Reagan Administration's private statements relate to a situation in which Iranian forces have moved further into southern Iraq, and are poised on the Kuwaiti border? Would ground forces be committed against Iran? Could they be commited in adequate numbers?

Second, from the earliest days of planning for the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF), it was never certain what the mission of the RDF would be in the event of an internal uprising, for instance, in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia. Unwillingness in the Arab states to cooperate with planners in developing the capacity to deploy US forces to the area increased in the light of articles published in US military journals about a possible mission for the RDF to take over the oil fields of Sauid Arabia. By the end of the Carter Administration, this issue was still intensively debated. Officials who had been involved in the debate wrote articles pointing out the dilemmas which the United States faced in having made a firm commitment to military action in the Gulf without having assured either the capability to deploy forces or being certain about what the mission might be.

President Reagan seemed to intervene in that argument when he said, in effect, that the United States could not afford to accept "any more Irans" in Saudi Arabia. He seemed to be saying that it would be the policy in his administration to intervene in an internal conflict in Saudi Arabia which threatened the flow of oil. Thus the Carter Doctrine was not only reaffirmed but significantly extended to encompass this second mission. Yet, it remains unclear how a mission to deal with an internal threat would be carried out.

A third problem for the RDF concerns the unavailability of adequate bases from which to conduct air operations if significant ground forces were deployed, for instance, into southwestern Iran against an invading Soviet force. Progress has been made in prepositioning supplies at Diego Garcia and in floating depots, but uncertainty about whether US air combat forces could operate from Saudi bases continues. Without the air cover such bases could provide, any capability to project significant forces into that area could be undercut.

POLITICAL QUESTIONS

Aside from the military problems involved in preparing a contingency basis for US operations in the likelihood of a threat to this strategic area, three fundamental political questions continue to haunt US ability to conduct an effective policy in this strategic area.

The first question concerns the loss of US credibility in the Middle East, due to its unquestioning support of Israel. This loss of credibility was perhaps most sharply described by King Hussein in an interview published by *The New York Times* on 15 March 1984. The interview focused on unquestioning US support for Israel in the Arab-Israeli context, especially following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. This issue impedes closer cooperation between the Gulf states and the United States even where they face a direct threat to their own security. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the smaller states of the Gulf frankly admit that they want to be able to depend on US protection, but find it politically difficult to be allied with the United States as long as the US stands squarely behind Israel. A broad political-military strategy toward the Gulf, therefore, depends on an effective policy in dealing with the potential for conflict in the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian-Lebanese area.

More specifically, this problem affects US-Iraqi relations. Although the Iraqis are eager to win American diplomatic support because of its importance in ending the war with Iran, the Iraqi government seems to be impeded in restoring diplomatic relations by the US position on Arab-Israeli issues. The Iraqi government now makes clear that its support of the position adopted by the Arab summit at Fez in 1982 included its support for efforts to negotiate peace with Israel. The fact that the United States has not responded to the initiative, Iraqi officials say privately, makes it difficult for them to resume a normal diplomatic relationship with the United States, although they have stepped up the dialogue despite the absence of formal relations.

A second political question is more basic: How will the United States relate to destabilizing social, political, and economic change? The Middle East is one of the most rapidly changing areas in the developing world today. Rapid change produces dislocation, and instability in some measure seems almost certain. We, in the United States, formerly spoke of our interest in maintaining the "stability" of key states in the Middle East. But today such a goal seems unrelated to the realities of rapid change. One of the main unresolved issues in Washington is how to position ourselves toward such change.

Americans do well in dealing with rapid change at home but badly in understanding or coping with it abroad. Some Americans could find stability in protecting the status quo by supporting existing regimes. Others would find a form of stability in orderly change, even if this meant a change in the character of regimes. This latter position acknowledges that change often cannot be shaped, that stability in any form may not be possible for a period of time. Therefore, the optimal policy for the United States may require adaptation to the forces producing change. Differences between those two approaches lie in the degree of emphasis on the stability of particular regimes as opposed to the evolution of a political system with which we can deal.*

All of this is to suggest that the United States, in setting its strategic posture toward the Gulf, continues to ignore the internal forces which are more likely to change the character of the regimes on the Arab side of the Gulf than an external threat from Iran or the Soviet Union. The key forces of change are those working from within each state, whether or not they are encouraged by Iranian or Soviet subversion. It is not easy—in fact, it may be impossible—for the United States to help direct those forces into constructive channels; but, certainly, the United States must make a serious effort to at least analyze the direction of these forces. Although it seems highly unlikely that military force could have quelled the upheaval in Iran, the one concrete US response was the development of the Rapid Deployment Force. A serious effort by President Carter to improve political analysis in the foreign affairs community lost momentum in the later 1970s and early 1980s—perhaps because little more was feasible, perhaps because of a lack of continuing interest from the highest levels of our government.

A third question relates to the political role of the Soviet Union. The United States recognizes that the Soviets are uneasy about the US military buildup in the area and have sought to limit it in political ways. The Soviets have also proposed to join the United States diplomatically in guaranteeing the free flow of oil through the Gulf. While US military planners will continue to cope with the problems

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*This paragraph is drawn from a broader discussion in Harold H. Saunders, *The Middle East Problem in the 1980s* (Washington, D.C.: The American Enterprise Institute, 1981), pp 16–26.

posed by the possible need to deal with Soviet military intervention in Iran, diplomats will have to deal with Soviet efforts to translate their global nuclear power into equal political participation in the affairs of this area. The problem posed centers on balancing the relationship with the Soviet Union so as to minimize the dangers of a clash, while preserving the US political position in the area.

The problem is posed, at least theoretically, by the Iran-Iraq war. Presumably, both the United States and the Soviet Union have an interest in seeing the war end without any drastic change in the political balance of the Gulf. Ideally, Moscow would like to preserve its position in Iraq, while trying again to improve its position in Iran—which it regards as a greater prize. The United States recognizes that the states south of Iraq regard both Iran and Iraq as potential threats. From Washington's viewpoint, a shattered Iran— which seems an unlikely outcome of the war now—could open the door again to further Soviet penetration while a sharp political change in Iraq would alter the political map of both the Gulf and the Arab-Israeli area. If US and Soviet interests are parallel, the question is raised whether parallel action would serve constructive purposes or would enhance the position of the Soviet Union in ways that moderate states in the area would fear and the United States could not accept. In this case, neither superpower may have the capacity to produce results, but failing the opportunity or desire for parallel action, there is still the possibility of dialogue to avoid confrontation.

US STRATEGIC POSTURE IN THE EIGHTIES

In the real world, the United States government may have gone as far as it can in the mid-1980s, to adjust its strategic posture to the new situation created by the revolution in Iran and the Iran-Iraq war. It has little political influence in Iraq and none in Iran. Its allies are unlikely to impose the economic sanctions Iraq believes might cause Iran to wind the war down sooner rather than later. The United States has the military capacity to keep open the Strait of Hormuz and some capacity to make a prolonged overt Iranian attack on the Arab states of the Gulf unsustainable. It does not yet have the military capacity to project significant ground forces into the area, although that is coming. The United States lacks facilities from which to operate combat aircraft, although the states of the area now realize they cannot both expect US military help and continue to avoid all appearance of cooperation with the United States. It may in time slowly erode the concrete military problems, but the political obstacles to fuller cooperation will not fall aside as long as the Israeli-Palestinian impasse remains. If the Arab-Israeli peace process resumed, cooperation on the defense of the Gulf States would be somewhat easier.

Two fundamental political questions remain: First, despite our vital interests in this area, can the United States really expect to influence the orderly evolution of a compatible political environment there? Do we even come near to developing a strategy for constructively relating to the inevitable forces of change that may negatively affect our interests? Second, if we do not have a strategy for maintaining some kind of compatible political environment there, can we realistically expect to deploy military forces even when we have the capability to do so?

The dangers posed by the Iran-Iraq war have underscored for us the conclusion that we cannot develop a workable strategy for protecting important interests in the Gulf unless we give as much energy to dealing with the political problems of the area as we devote to our military preparations.

Chapter 4

THE EFFECT OF THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR ON SOVIET STRATEGY IN THE PERSIAN GULF

Michael Lenker

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THE UNPREDICTABILITY OF MIDDLE EAST POLITICS

The two crises currently in progress on the opposite edges of the Fertile Crescent have highlighted the unpredictability of Middle East politics and underscored the pitfalls awaiting foreign participants in regional affairs. Israel's invasion of Lebanon and Iraq's attack on Iran have produced unforeseen results and developments, the course of which cannot yet be fully assessed. One consequence of these attacks is to strengthen the standing of the regimes in Syria and Iran. In each country the aggression helped to consolidate the domestic political scene and enabled the government to gain massive support for a vigorous confrontation of the invader. The determined, uncompromising attitude of Syria and Iran has paid ample dividends as demonstrated by the US fiasco in Beirut and the collapse of the Iraqi onslaught. Syria and Iran have emerged as the two most dynamic powers in the Middle East by holding the key to strife in Lebanon and the solution of the Gulf war.

The two conflicts highlight the diminishing influence of the superpowers in the Middle East. The cost of involvement in regional politics has been on the rise and the potential gains disproportionately meager. Superpowers are frequently forced to adapt to unusual circumstances in an uncommon manner when they participate in regional politics. One of the latest ironies of this sort is the coincidence of their interests with regard to the Gulf war. Both the United States and the USSR have remained formally neutral, fearing the potentially dangerous consequences which could stem from the collapse of one of the belligerents. As soon as there was a possibility that Iraq might be destroyed, the Soviets started immediately to supply the Baghdad regime with the necessary military hardware. The Americans, although much later and to a much smaller degree, adjusted their policy in Baghdad's favor in order to restore a balanced situation on the front.

The superpowers also have to deal with increasingly intricate relationships among their various regional allies. This further complicates their own strategies and limits the range of their choices. Thus, the Saudis, despite their close relationship with the United States, give financial support to both Iraq and Syria—two leftist and anti-American countries. Saudi aid to Damascus is a remarkable oddity indeed, because Damascus supports Iran in its war against their Arab brothers and fellow Baathists from Iraq, and because Damascus has become the center of the regional communist movement and the seat of the small but quite visible Communist Party of Saudi Arabia. The Soviets find themselves in a similar situation, unable to reconcile their two major clients in the region, Syria and Iraq. Syria's support of the Iranian regime, which is Iraq's most bitter enemy and also displays a growing hostility toward the USSR, serves to aggravate matters considerably.

The Iraqi invasion of Iran in September of 1980 was a distinct setback for Soviet strategic plans in the Persian Gulf, and it has had a serious impact on Moscow's ambitions in other areas of the Middle East as well. Besides adding new problems to the list of regional vexations, the war accelerated certain developments which forced the Soviets to alter the order of their strategic priorities. While the growing threat of direct US involvement in the region has remained Moscow's foremost concern, the relations among Soviet southern neighbors, the revival of Islam, and the situation in Iran follow as major problems facing Soviet strategists.

US INFLUENCE

From the very start of the war in the Persian Gulf, the Soviets have urged the warring parties to end hostilities, arguing that only the Americans and associated imperialists would profit from the continuation of the conflict. In the Soviet view, the United States has benefited from the Gulf war in several ways:

- The war has shifted attention from the Arab-Israel conflict and diluted the efforts of Arab states to sustain their opposition to the Camp David Accords.

- The war has relieved much of the pressure from Egypt which had been isolated from most of the Arab countries. As the tide of war turned against the Baghdad regime, the Iraqis found it necessary to seek Egyptian support. This has led to a complete reversal of the Iraqi position from being one of the major sponsors of Egypt's ostracism to becoming the main advocate of Egypt's readmittance to the Arab family, from which it had been excluded because of its collusion with the Zionists.

- The war placed before the Soviets a major dilemma: while Iraq was Moscow's important ally, the new Iranian regime delighted the Soviets with its fierce anti–American stand that culminated in the taking of US embassy personnel in Tehran. Internal developments in Iran showed many signs of moving in a direction favorable to Soviet strategic ambitions. While the Soviets tried to maintain strict impartiality following the eruption of hostilities, it became obvious that sooner or later they would be forced to take a stand in favor of one side or the other. That eventually happened when they resumed the deliveries of weapons and other material to Iraq in the summer of 1982.

- The war prevented Iraq from achieving hegemony in the Arab East by slowly sapping its strength. At the beginning of hostilities Egypt's isolation provided Iraq with an excellent opportunity of achieving this goal. A quick knockout blow would have led both to the recovery of part of the Arab homeland occupied by the Aryan enemy and to the confirmation of Iraqi supremacy in a truly Arab Gulf. Unfortunately for the Soviets, the war produced the opposite result and they lost an excellent opportunity to profit from an increase in Baghdad's political standing in the region.

- The war forced the Baghdad government to look toward the West for material assistance as the situation on the front deteriorated. Agreements were reached with France and other West European countries providing for deliveries of war material and related technology. This was hardly welcomed by the Kremlin, which heretofore had held a monopoly on military sales. Equally disturbing for Moscow was the growing willingness of the Iraqis to improve their relations with the United States. The visit to Baghdad last fall of Donald Rumsfeld, President Reagan's special envoy, represented a significant breakthrough in this respect. Despite recent massive shipments of Soviet arms and increased investments in various key economic projects, Iraq has been gradually slipping out of the Soviet sphere of influence. Therefore, Moscow's hope of reviving the anti-imperialist front with Iraq as its central participant has become very unrealistic.

- The war increased the threat of direct US involvement in the region. This is the most disturbing prospect for the Soviets. In May of 1981, six of the Arab Gulf states established the Gulf Cooperation Council in response to the war situation. It soon became obvious that the United States would increase its military involvement in the region, at the least as suppliers of weaponry and training for the member states of the GCC. As it became clear that Iraq would fail to achieve its military objectives in the conflict, but would eventually have to defend its own sovereignty, the need of the GCC for US assistance further increased. The GCC's fear of an Iranian victory and the infection of their own territories with an Islamic revolutionary fervor has contributed to the generally muted Arab response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. This was another shock to the Soviets who came to realize that no matter how strongly the Americans stood behind the Israelis, US assistance would be accepted by the Gulf states as long as they felt threatened. The formulation of the so-called Carter Doctrine in January 1980, allowing the United States to send troops to protect vital US interests in the region, merely gave the United States an official pretext through which it can respond.

- An important consequence of continued war has been the creation of plans by the oil-producing countries to protect their oil exports from war operations. These measures indicate that the oil producers want to be prepared not only for the eventual spread of this conflict throughout the area but also for other kinds of emergency situations in the future. This is why the plans envisage a gradual shift of oil shipments from the Persian Gulf and the construction of facilities which would permit them to avoid the three vulnerable water passages in the region: the Strait of Hormuz, the Bab al-Mandab, and the Suez Canal.

Several important steps have already been taken in this respect. The Saudis have completed a new transnational pipeline from Abqaiq to Yanbu, on the eastern shore of the Red Sea.[1] Iraq recently announced plans to build a new crude oil export pipeline to connect the oil fields of the

Basra region with this Saudi pipeline.[2] Most recently, Iraq concluded an agreement with Jordan to construct another East–West pipeline from Haditha (about 200 km northwest of Baghdad) to the Jordanian port of Aqaba.[3] These plans represent a clear shift of future oil traffic from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea. Iraq has apparently reached another similar agreement with Turkey to build a pipeline to carry liquefied petroleum gas from Iraq's northern oil fields to the Mediterranean. The pipeline would run parallel to the existing oil line from Kirkuk to the Turkish port of Yumurtalik.[4]

Other countries have their own plans of this sort. Iraq and the Arab Gulf states reportedly are considering construction of another pipeline which would run southward through Oman and terminate in Khawr Fakkan, in the Gulf of Oman.[5]

The Iranians are also sensitive to the danger of exporting oil through precarious straits and plan to bypass the Strait of Hormuz with a 1,200 km pipeline running from the Gachsaran oil fields to the Indian Ocean port of Jask.[6]

How will these measures influence Soviet strategic planning? Certainly the shift of oil shipping from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean decreases the importance of the Bab al-Mandab Straits which lie close to two Soviet allies, Ethiopia and the PDRY. Moreover, the Egyptian SUMED pipeline linking the Red Sea with the Mediterranean provides an alternative to the Suez Canal.[7] If necessary, oil could be transported from the terminals at Yanbu and the future terminal at Aqaba by the SUMED line through the Egyptian territory to the Mediterranean. What certainly has not escaped Soviet attention is that on the opposite side of the Red Sea port of Yanbu lies Ras Banas—a site designed for use as a US military base.[8]

The Soviets are convinced that although the United States openly advocates the cessation of the conflict, it wants to keep the war going in order to consolidate US influence and to ensure US presence in the Persian Gulf area. In the Soviet view, the end of the Gulf war would seriously damage the US policy in the region. Peace between Iran and Iraq would be especially painful to US policy as it is recovering from the fiasco in Lebanon.[9]

COOPERATION OF SOVIET SOUTHERN NEIGHBORS: AN EMERGING ALLIANCE?

In December of 1983, the Iranian Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs met with the Ambassadors of Turkey and Pakistan. Iran sought to formally revive the Regional Cooperation for Development Agreement (RCD) that the Shah established in the 1960s.[10] Nothing of importance stands out about the RCD's past performance. In fact, Iran's post–revolutionary leaders condemned it as a product of the Shah's servitude to US interests.

Tehran's desire to revive the agreement was cordially received by both Turkey and Pakistan. The economic relations between Iran and the two countries had been thriving prior to this Iranian initiative. Turkey has become Iran's number one trading partner, and Iran's exchanges of goods with Pakistan have also been on the rise.

The formalizing of this tripartite agreement is a by-product of the Gulf war. With the Soviets increasingly supporting Iraq in the conflict, Iran naturally will tend to seek closer economic partnership with its Islamic neighbors. This concerns not only trade but also transit arrangements. Availability of secure transit routes and facilities is vital for Iran in view of its geographic position and the restrictions caused by the war. The partnership with Turkey and Pakistan seems, therefore, to be the only choice under the circumstances. Iran has clearly demonstrated its preference for the RCD over the USSR in cancelling plans to build the IGAT II pipeline, which was to have passed through the Soviet Union.[11]

Although the RCD appears to be an innocent economic venture, some of its implications are alarming from the Soviet viewpoint. First, the center of the RCD lies in the US sphere, as Turkey is a NATO member and Pakistan is the third largest beneficiary of US military aid (after Israel and Egypt). Second, neutrality has enabled Pakistan and Turkey to gain economically from Iran and Iraq, while gaining politically as negotiators and mediators. Third, the RCD represents an Islamic alliance—a potential disturbance for regional Soviet security. In sum, the partnership of Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan might outgrow its purely economic nature, constituting a dangerous development for the Soviet Union. This partnership implies Soviet exclusion from any substantial economic influence in Iran, and also from an eventual role in mediating the end of the war. Finally, the Islamic basis of this cooperation, so much emphasized by the Khomeini regime, is another setback for Soviet efforts to enhance their position in the region. If the RCD extends into other areas, Moscow may witness the growth of a potentially strong association of Islamic states on its southern border—a new regional coalition with a potential anti-Soviet orientation.

THE REVIVAL OF ISLAM

The Islamic renaissance was first fully noticed about a decade ago but it was not taken seriously until the overthrow of the Shah in 1979. Not only did this renaissance catch the Soviets by surprise, they have not yet acknowledged the full potential of the Islamic movement. Recent Soviet policy analyses regard the Islamic revival as a transitory phenomenon, although they recognize its significance to Third World countries. The Soviets fear revolutionary Islam more than the gradual Islamization process advocated by moderate Muslims: the Iranian revolution represents the first successful mass movement in recent history which was not guided by Marxist ideology.

Islam provided the driving force of the historical revolt in Iran (which the Soviet ideology dismisses as an anachronism of marginal relevance), and this made Islam a formidable competitor of Marxist revolutionary strategies in many Third World countries. Furthermore, while most of the nationalist and leftist regimes have failed miserably, the Islamic revolution not only triumphed in Iran but exerts an increasing appeal in other countries. Disturbances in Morocco and Tunisia have shown this, and most recently, pro-Islamic disturbances in several black African countries have led to official concern for conspiracies against the current governments instigated by Iranian diplomats.[12] Islamic militancy has also been credited with forcing the withdrawal of US Marines from Beirut.

Moderate governments in the region cope with the dangers of Islamic militancy in a variety of ways. Some react to the situation by imposing their own Islamic programs. In the Sudan, for instance, Islamic law is now in force in the entire country and Pakistan is striving to find the most appropriate form of Islamic government. In Turkey, the government made clear its plans to cooperate more closely with Islamic states and reorient its foreign policy toward the Islamic and Arab world. It was a significant gesture that Turkish president Kenan Evrar represented his country at the Islamic summit in Casablanca last January, making it the first such meeting ever attended by the highest representative of Turkey.[13]

Islam poses other problems to the Soviets. Militant Islam, for instance, has borrowed many of the tactics of Marxist revolutionaries and has skillfully applied them, sometimes against the Marxists themselves, as in Iran. The very progress of the Iranian revolution invokes parallels with the Russian October Revolution and with communist takeovers elsewhere. The old regime is overturned by a coalition of opposition groups, the most radical of which then proceeds to eliminate its former associates. Like the Russian revolution, the Iranian revolution had to defend itself against foreign intervention, which helped to consolidate the new regime. The role of the Pasdaran as the guardians of the revolution is strongly reminiscent of people's militias of the communist states.

The Soviets face another problem with radical Islam, as Islamic political theory severely limits the options for applying classical Soviet strategies. Democratic principles and laws are rendered inapplicable when confronted with a community of the believers guided by a divine law which covers all aspects of human activities. Divine law (the Koran) excludes political pluralism, justifies the existence of Islamic institutions exclusively, and consequently results in a one-party system.[14]

Similarly, revolutionary Islam presents itself as an incomparably more radical movement than leftist secularism. Its extreme manifestations, such as the suicide attacks in Lebanon and Kuwait, may be repellent to the West, but their success was indisputable. The Islamic revolution humiliated the United States in both Iran and Lebanon, something which had not happened when anti-American policies were coached by the Soviets. Such achievements of Islamic radicalism serve as an inspiration to those Arabs who have not ceased searching for alternative strategies to fight Zionism and Israel.

The revival of Islam has had a limited impact on Muslims in the USSR. Western authors tend to exaggerate the influence of the Islamic revival in Soviet Central Asia, particularly after the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan; Soviet authorities are nevertheless concerned. This is curiously demonstrated in publications emanating from the Central Asian republics. Local newspapers and periodicals are publishing an increasing number of articles about Islam while also publishing more books of anti-religious nature than any other area in the Soviet Union.[15] Furthermore, the national "atheistic education" (directed primarily at noncommunists) has been focused most recently on the Islamic parts of the USSR. Moscow papers clearly show this trend. While some papers tend to criticize the poor results of this campaign it should be noted that Muslim regions of the USSR have always been areas where anti-religious propaganda has failed to take root.[16]

Finally, in Afghanistan, the Soviets are involved in a direct military confrontation with Muslim insurgents. Although there are secular groups among the opposition, Islam has been generally credited with the successful resistance against the Soviet invaders. This invasion has brought the Kremlin into its first serious conflict with Islam abroad. One month after the Soviet invasion, the Islamic conference convened and unanimously condemned the invasion, demanding the immediate withdrawal of Soviet forces. Since the official formulation of this demand in January 1980, Afghan insurgents have received material support from a number of Islamic countries. Pakistan has an Afghan refugee population estimated at over 3 million; Iran, too, supports several hundred thousand Afghan refugees. Financial and military assistance has been increasingly forthcoming from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, much to Moscow's publicly expressed displeasure. The continuing Afghan resistance is of historical significance in that it is the first time that massive direct assistance from Moscow has failed to "normalize" a state ruled by a marxist regime. Indisputably, pious Muslims will give credit for this success to their religion and the rest will be reminded that Islam is still a potent political force.

INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAN

Internal developments in Iran hold the key to the future of the Gulf war and, indirectly, to many Soviet problems in the region. Given Khomeini's adamant refusal to consider any negotiations or compromise with the government of Saddam Hussein, only a radical change on the home front will alter Iran's commitment to fight until the Baghdad regime is toppled. However, no drastic changes appear likely in Iran in the near future. Recent elections there have affirmed the leadership of the Islamic Republic Party. Underground opposition groups have not made any display of strength; their ranks appear to have been decimated, and the destruction of the Tudeh Party recently culminated in the sentencing of its remaining leaders to death or long prison terms. Of the politburo, only general Secretary Kianuri and two others still await sentencing.

For the Soviets, the fate of the Iranian communists has been just another chapter of the same sad history of the Middle Eastern communist movements. Once again they looked on helplessly as their comrades were accused and convicted of treason, espionage, and sabotage.[17] The added dimension this time was the form of the trials. These proceedings, with the theatrical confessions of each of the leaders, including Kianuri himself, were carbon copies of proceedings during the Stalinist era in the USSR and Eastern Europe.

Given the stability of domestic politics and the apparent support of the war effort, what are the hopes that the war will strain Iran's economic resources to collapse? Shortages of food, energy, and medicine have already occurred, but have not yet posed a threat to the government. As Iran's trade relations with neighboring countries are flourishing, the Soviets certainly would not advocate any type of economic boycott of Iran. In fact, even the Soviets have been increasing their trade with the Khomeini regime.

With little change in sight in Iranian domestic politics, the Soviets might hope only for the deterioration of the Iranian economy as a consequence of the war and opposition to the conflict among the Iranian people. The latter would certainly not be tolerated: one of the reasons for the liquidation of the Tudeh Party was its constant calls for the end of hostilities. That quite simply demonstrated that Iranian communists were promoting the Soviet, not the Iranian cause.[18]

Perhaps the only remaining alternative is for Iran to realize it cannot simply confront superior military forces with an endless sacrifice of human life. Khomeini's constant precondition for the cessation of hostilities has been Saddam Hussein's head. Conceivably, the Iraqis themselves will act to remove him. Should Hussein be removed, there is a chance that the Iranians will reconsider their negotiating position, which presently also includes the destruction of the Baathist regime and payment of huge indemnities.

SOVIET RESPONSE

It can be expected that the Soviets will push to have the entire Gulf region recognized as a neutral area, free of either superpower's military presence. It is a concept which they have suggested in the past. The Soviet campaign to neutralize the Gulf region goes back to Leonid Brezhnev's speech in December 1980, when, on a state visit to India, he proposed to neutralize the Gulf region and ban any alliances or pacts between the Gulf states and the nuclear powers.[19] The benefits of such a strategy to the USSR are that it would obviate the need for further military rapprochement between the Arab Gulf states and the United States and, furthermore, it would remove the threat to free passage through the Hormuz Strait as a pretext for the presence of the US Navy in the area.

Soviet efforts to undermine the US position in the region will continue, mainly by capitalizing on the continued US economic, political, and military support of Israel. In this respect, the withdrawal of the marines from Lebanon is a disguised blessing for the United States as it removes a major focal point from the Soviet propaganda arsenal and redirects attention to the Gulf war and Afghanistan.

A new factor in Soviet strategic policy is to encourage Arab–Western European entente. This is evident from the coverage in the Soviet media of visits by various heads of Arab states to Western Europe. Such a warming of Arab-European relations naturally comes at the expense of European support for Israel. Soviet coverage implies that public sentiment in Western Europe is increasingly anti-Israeli. Coupled with the strong anti-American sentiment publicly expressed at the time of the Pershing missile deployment, the Soviets can be expected to exploit the situation by attempting to split the United States and its Western European allies on these issues.

The Soviets will continue to press for improved economic and political relations with the Arab Gulf states. They retain the hope of being able to establish some form of official representation in Saudi Arabia and in the other Gulf states. They are encouraged in this hope by the large increases in the volume of Saudi-Soviet trade which have recently occurred.[20]

The Soviets have already made important moves to counter the danger of an emerging alliance on its southern borders. At the first sign of a possible renewed tripartite cooperation between Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan, the Soviet Union suggested to both Pakistan and Turkey a review of their bilateral economic relations. The Soviets have held a series of negotiations with both countries and the terms of the Soviet proposals are reported to have been viewed as extremely attractive. While the specific details of the various deals are still being negotiated, acceptance of these offers will enable the Soviets to attach these two countries more closely to the Soviet economy, and to increase their dependence on Soviet imports.[21]

The Soviets criticize the "misuse" of religion by the imperialists and their agents. They do not openly attack Islam or any of its revival forms and, given their desire to expand

and improve relations with several key Muslim states, it is unlikely that they will do so in the near future. They will try instead to distinguish between the "positive aspects" of the Islamization process (such as opposition to Israel and foreign domination) and its "negative aspects," in an effort to find common ground with their own interests. With regard to Iran, they do not wish to close all doors and, consequently, prefer to attack the "ultrareactionary forces" in that country rather than the government as such.

The Soviets can be expected to criticize specific aspects of Iranian government policy, such as its crackdown on the Tudeh Party, rather than condemn the Islamic orientation of the regime. They will also seek out alternative allies within Iran and will carefully monitor the course of Iranian politics after the election. Iran, after all, has great geo-political significance for the Soviet Union; it is an immediate neighbor, strategically located at one of the world's most sensitive spots. Moreover, of all the Muslim states, it possesses the greatest potential to act as a source of destabilization for the Muslim republics of Soviet Central Asia. Hence, Soviet interests would not be best served by openly siding with Iraq in the war. In fact, the Soviets continue to support Iran indirectly by tacitly aiding their allies—North Korea, Syria, Libya, and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen—with arms shipments that are often rerouted to Tehran. But the situation's ultimate irony is that although no Soviet interests are advanced by the war—indeed it is the United States which gains by its continuation—Moscow is caught in the bind of having to arm both Iraq and Iran, either directly or indirectly, for a war which only further erodes the Soviet position in the area.

ENDNOTES

1. E. Stanley Tucker, "Focus on Pipeline Developments," *Petroleum Economist,* August 1982, p. 314.

2. *Middle East Economic Survey,* 9 April and 30 April 1984, p. A3.

3. *Middle East Economic Survey,* 16 April 1984, p. A4.

4. *Middle East Economic Survey,* 12 March 1984, p. A3.

5. Tucker, "Focus on Pipeline," p. 314.

6. *Middle East Economic Survey,* 30 January, 1984, p. A5.

7. Tucker, "Focus on Pipeline," p. 314.

8. *Al-Ahali,* 15 February 1984, p.1.

9. V. Victorov, "The Persian Gulf: Washington's Imperial Ambitions," *International Affairs,* July 1982, p.36.

10. *Dawn,* 22 December, 1983, p. 12.

11. The IGAT II agreement was signed in 1976, envisaging a 1400 km pipeline to deliver natural gas to the USSR. The project was dropped in 1980. The domestic section of the pipeline might be resurrected soon *(Middle East Economic Survey,* 6 May 1983.)

12. *Izvestiya,* 6 February 1984, p.4.

13. *Cumhuriyet,* 19 January 1984, p.1. In his speech Kenan Evren said that Turkey was a part of the Middle East, and that, as such, it should play a stronger role in the region. He went so far as to suggest a common Arab and Islamic strategy against Israel.

14. This argument is often used to justify existing dictatorships. For instance, Zafar Ahmed Ansari, the chairman of the Constitution Commission on the form of government in Pakistan, has declared that there was no room for a multiparty system in an Islamic state. According to him, "... the political parties promote dissension, disruption, and disunity among the Muslims." (*Dawn,* 13 April 1984, p. 22.)

15. The number of antireligious publications in the USSR has been on the increase. While in 1980 there were 154 such books published, in 1982 their number reached 195. Out of these, twenty were specifically devoted to Islam in 1980 (17.5%) and 44 (22.6%) in 1982. (J. Fullerton, *The Soviet Occupation of Afghanistan*, (S. China Hong Kong: Morning Post Publications, 1983).

16. A Pravda editorial complaining about the ineffectiveness and poor organization of antireligious propaganda singled out Turkmen SSR. Citing a specific example of the general poor showing of this important part of the ideological front, the editorial lamented that in 1982 in the Astrakhan region there were only 78 antireligious lectures while during the same period the Muslims and the Christian Orthodox held 220 religious ceremonies (*Pravda*, 14 December 1983, p.1).

17. The Tudeh Party Committee in exile published a declaration in its West Berlin paper, *Rahe Tudeh*, which denied the charges of the Iranian regime against the Tudeh members and vigorously defended the loyalty of the party to the revolution. The declaration contains the following interesting affirmation: "Not only did the party not stab [the revolution] in the back, but it was instrumental in neutralizing a number of conspiracies against the revolution and against the Islamic Republic of Iran." This is a clear verification of a rumor which has been circulating for some time that the Soviets provided the Tudeh leadership with information about leftist opposition groups which the party subsequently handed over to the Islamic leadership. This obviously contributed to the annihilation of the underground opposition (*Rahe Tudeh*, 4 May 1983 quoted by *Rude Pravo*, 20 May 1983).

18. There were other reasons for the liquidation of the Tudeh, such as the Soviets' resumption of arms shipments to Iran in summer of 1982 and the apparent Soviet reluctance to negotiate the end of the Afghan crisis (in good faith). It is an interesting chronological coincidence that the mass arrests of the Tudeh occurred almost simultaneously with the beginning of a major Soviet offensive in Afghanistan in February of 1983.

19. *FBIS (USSR)*, 11 December 1980, p. D–7.

20. Saudi-Soviet trade has increased significantly over the past several years. Despite the absence of diplomatic relations, trade volume has increased from 5.6 million rubles (US $4.4 million) in

1975, to 25.5 million rubles (US $20.1) in 1981. Projections for 1984 indicate an expected trade volume of 40 million rubles (US $32 million). (*Arab Times*, 16 January 1984, p.4).

21. The Soviet media has often reflected the official hope that the Zia regime in Pakistan might collapse. This tendency was particularly conspicuous during last year's disturbances. Almost unnoticed in the Soviet press were Moscow's negotiations with Islamabad on a major economic agreement. The Soviets offered the Pakistanis an extremely attractive package deal involving Soviet help in energy and industrial manufacturing projects worth over $20 billion over the next five years (*The Middle East Times*, 14 April 1984, p. 14). Similar negotiations are being conducted between the Soviet Union and Turkey. As is the case with Pakistan, the envisaged agreements will mean a significant boost in trade and increased Soviet assistance in the energy and transportation sectors. Turkey will buy, among other things, natural gas which will be delivered through a pipeline, to be constructed through Rumania and Bulgaria that will terminated in the Istanbul area (*The Middle East Times*, 14 April 1984, p. 15).

Chapter 5

PAKISTAN AND THE GULF

Craig Baxter

Pakistan has frequently been described as a "front line state" since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December, 1979. It has used this status to obtain an agreement with the United States under which the United States will augment and modernize Pakistan's armed forces. Both the Carter and Reagan administrations have assumed, in public statements, that there is a community of interests between Pakistan and the United States to oppose further Soviet expansion in South Asia.

It has been further assumed that Pakistan also has an interest in limiting Soviet incursions into the Middle East and, specifically, into the Gulf region. This assumption has been used to provide additional justification for appropriation requests from the Congress to support the agreement reached between the two countries on both military credits and economic assistance.

Pakistan has also been characterized as a nation with "military men for rent"[1] as it has a substantial number (perhaps 30,000) of its military forces stationed in the Gulf, in the larger area of the Middle East, and even beyond in such countries as Zimbabwe. The posting of Pakistani forces has therefore led to the conclusion that Pakistan has a military stake in preserving the status quo in the Gulf region.

This article, however, will argue that the military interest of Pakistan in the Gulf is economic, and within that broader area of interest employment opportunities and the remittances which result are of even greater importance than the trade between Pakistan and the Gulf states. There are also important religious ties, especially with Saudi Arabia, that are a key to Pakistani aspirations to be among the leading Islamic nations and to its goal of creating an Islamic state of Pakistan. Military and strategic interests are of significance only in so far as they tie into the more basic interests and it is unlikely that Pakistan would become directly or indirectly involved militarily or diplomatically in superpower conflict or intraregional conflict in the Gulf.

AMERICAN JUSTIFICATION FOR ASSISTANCE TO PAKISTAN

In addition to the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan, the presumed military interest of Pakistan in the Middle East has been used as a justification for American military assistance to Pakistan. The budget request for fiscal year 1985 contains $325 million for foreign military sales credits for Pakistan as well as another one million for the international military education and training program. In supporting this request before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the House Foreign Affairs Committee on 9 February 1984, Major General Edward Trixier, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, said:

> From separately derived national viewpoints, the United States and Pakistan have significant shared interests in the Southwest Asia region. This commonality makes it advantageous for us to aid Pakistan in enhancing its security and maintaining its sovereignty and independence. In return for our assistance we have sought no United States military bases in Pakistan.

Trixier added that Pakistan "is a friendly state of great importance to the stability of Southwest Asia, of the Persian Gulf."[2]

These views of the Department of Defense were supported by testimony from the Department of State. Whatever opinions may be held on the propriety of American assistance to Pakistan on the basis of its "front line" status vis-a-vis Afghanistan, it is difficult to support such aid on the grounds that Pakistan is "of great importance to the stability of the Persian Gulf." Military activity in a region does not necessarily equate to strategic interests in that area. The economic advantages, training opportunities, display of Islamic unity, and obtaining of equipment from the assignment of Pakistani military outside Pakistan are considerable and in themselves can justify Pakistan's actions.

PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL INTERESTS

Nations base their international activities on their perceived national interests. It is necessary to look closely at what appear to be the national interests of Pakistan to see if there actually are "significant shared national interests," where there is an almost accidental coincidence for the time being, and whether, in a situation critical to the United States, there would be any shared interests at all.

The United States has declared that an interruption of the flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz would challenge a "vital interest" and would presumably lead to the use of American (and possibly European) military force to rectify the situation. A major threat to the government of Saudi Arabia—the remaining pillar of the twin pillar policy in the Gulf now that the Shah's Iran has fallen—would possibly also evoke a similar response from the United States. It is unlikely that either—or any other similarly "critical" situation—would bring about a military action by Pakistan. Pakistan is not a replacement pillar for Iran.

Pakistan's national interests can be subsumed under four specific areas: the subcontinent, territorial integrity, Islamic solidarity, and economic and military assistance. It is clear that these are interrelated but they can be considered separately.

Pakistan's primary interest remains security within the subcontinent. India and Pakistan have been at war three times (1948, 1965, and 1971) since the two became independent in 1947, as the result of the partitioning of the former

British Indian Empire. The causes of these military conflicts and the frequent non-military disputes between the two are described in vastly different manners by Indians and Pakistanis, but whatever the disagreements it remains a fact of subcontinental life that each is greatly concerned about the actions of the other.

Pakistanis often claim that India has not accepted the partition of 1947 and wishes to reestablish a united India. Many Pakistanis are convinced that India instigated the Bangladeshi revolution of 1971 as a first step toward the weakening of Pakistan and the eventual reabsorption of the areas of greater India now under Pakistani and Bangladeshi control. Since 1971, there have been a number of steps taken by Pakistan under Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq and by India under the Congress and Janata governments to bring the two countries closer together, but the underlying distrust has not been dispelled and is not unlikely to be. Thus Pakistan's first consideration is defense against real or imagined threats from India.

The subcontinental balance has been greatly upset by the Soviet action in Afghanistan. Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan have seldom been cordial although there were indications of improvement shortly before the Daud regime in Afghanistan was overthrown by the first of three communist coups in 1977. Under each of the three communist regimes relations have been, to say the least, strained. The Soviet installation in December 1979 of the Babrak Karmal regime, accompanied by the Soviet invasion, brought about a confrontation between the two neighbors.

Some Pakistanis are concerned that the Soviet step is but the first in a series which is aimed at dismemberment of Pakistan through Soviet assistance to dissident elements in Baluchistan and the Northwest Frontier Province.[3] Among this group, some even see a joint Indian-Soviet move to divide Pakistan, with the Punjab and Sind going to India, the

Soviets obtaining a sea base (perhaps at poorly located Gwadur, perhaps at Karachi), and the Soviets gaining superiority in Southwest Asia and the Indian Ocean. (Recent Indian comments, including those by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, on the disturbances in Sind have added fuel to this belief.) It is not suggested here that this scenario, or any other extreme scenario has any basis in fact but it is cited to indicate the primacy of the subcontinent in Pakistani strategic thinking.

The location of the Soviets on the border and the presence of almost three million Afghan refugees in the Frontier Province and Baluchistan have encouraged some Pakistanis to look toward a negotiated settlement of the Afghan impasse. The refugees present political, economic, and social problems for Pakistan. A settlement, unlikely though it may be, which would permit some if not all of the refugees to return to Afghanistan would alleviate these problems. On the other hand, the Afghan invasion has benefitted Pakistan to the extent that military and economic assistance have been forthcoming not only from the United States but also from other Western nations, the wealthier Islamic countries, and China.

These comments relate closely to the second major interest of Pakistan, which is to maintain its territorial integrity. No other newly independent nation has performed so poorly in the task of national integration that it has lost part of its territory to a separatist movement. Although India did intervene after actual fighting began in March 1971, the seeds of the separation were planted almost at the same time Pakistan gained its independence.[4] With a loss of Bangladesh and about 56 percent of its population, Pakistan is now faced with a new disparity in that 62 percent of the population of residual Pakistan is Punjabi. The Punjab is the most prosperous province and contributes to the military and civil bureaucracies in greater proportion than its ratio in the population. Disaffection in Sind, the Frontier Province, and

Baluchistan is great and provides a potential fertile field for outside interference. The present regime has taken a number of economic steps to counter disaffection, but in a crisis unity might have to be preserved by the internal use of military powers (as in Baluchistan during the Bhutto regime).

Pakistan also considers the former Indian princely state of Jammu and Kashmir a territory whose "status is undetermined."[5] The wars of 1948 and 1965 were fought over Kashmir. For practical purposes the settlement has been determined; the present line of control is a de facto international boundary. Nonetheless, India holds that Pakistan occupies a portion of Indian territory and Pakistan maintains that India has failed to hold a plebiscite promised by the Indian government when Kashmir acceded to India in 1948. Two wars in the past (and some fighting during the 1971 conflict) require each nation to assign a high priority to defense in the Kashmir region and along the recognized boundary to the south.

A third Pakistani interest is to maintain and develop further its relations in the Islamic world. But it must be noted that this interest is not limited to the members of the GCC or even to the Arab world. In the January 1984 summit at Casablanca, President Zia was especially critical of some unnamed (it appears Libya and Syria were particularly intended) Arab states who, he said, wanted to use the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for Arab purposes only. He did this when he joined Sekou Toure of Guinea in pressing the summit to offer readmission to Egypt and Iran. Although the latter did not accept the offer it should be noted that Pakistan sees the OIC as including all nations with Muslim majorities.

Pakistan deplored Egypt's peace treaty with Israel as did almost all Muslim nations. Pakistan has not had good political (as opposed to economic) relations with Iran during the Khomeini regime but neither of these considerations outweighed its desire for a single, unified voice for the Muslim states. Pakistan has worked toward an improvement of its relations with Bangladesh as part of its concern for Islamic unity. A common wariness toward India also contributes to this rapprochement.

Pakistan has also wished to avoid intra-Islamic and intra-Arab disputes. It has worked as part of the OIC group attempting to mediate the Iran-Iraq war but has publicly taken no position in favor of either side. Besides seeking a peaceful resolution of the Lebanon problem and opposing the US role, Pakistan is neutral to internal disputes within Arab and Islamic nations. This, in turn, contributes to the acceptability of Pakistanis in Arab states and Iran. The bases for Pakistan's involvement in the Islamic world are employment, remittances, trade, development assistance and investment opportunities.

The final interest is the preservation of sources for funding of economic development and military supplies. Pakistan obtains economic assistance from the West, the Soviet bloc, China, and the Arab nations. Although relations with the Soviet Union are at a low point, the Soviets have continued assistance to the Karachi steel mill and other projects and are reported to be interested in the building of a barrage on the Indus River.[6] The United States has pledged $1.6 billion in economic assistance over a five-year period to go along with an equal amount in military assistance. Arab assistance to Pakistan began in 1973 and in the next three years amounted to almost one billion dollars. Assistance from China has been mainly in the military field. Pakistan, therefore, must retain minimally cordial relationships with each group if its large development assistance needs are to be met and if its desires in the military area are to be partially funded.

RELATION TO THE MIDDLE EAST

The key role of the Middle East in implementing Pakistan's basic national interests is clear. Even Pakistan's security within the subcontinent is aided both by the military employment, training, and equipment opportunities in the Middle East and by the fungibility of economic assistance given by Arab nations which can release hard currency generated by Pakistan for the purchase of weapons and equipment from noncredit sources.

To repeat, in so far as the Middle East is concerned the principal interests of Pakistan are trade, employment, and religious ties. The current Pakistani military activity in the Middle East is tied to all three of these interests and in some cases is historic, dating back to the periods before and during the British colonization of the subcontinent.

It is, however, unlikely that any of these relationships would result in Pakistani intervention in a crisis (as defined by the United States and the West) in the region, either one that required acting to prevent or reverse an Iranian closure of the Strait of Hormuz, or one in which the Soviet Union was directly involved. In the latter case it is possible that Pakistan might be involved against the Soviets on its own territory.

TRADE

In 1971 West Pakistan lost East Pakistan markets and needed replacements if its industries were to maintain and expand production. New and more valuable (as they are hard currency) markets were found in the Middle East. Oil revenues began to expand greatly at about the same time. The Bhutto government actively promoted exports to the area of both goods and manpower, drawing heavily on religious ties to do so and using the 1974 Lahore Islamic summit as a marketing device as well as a political and religious gathering. Closer attention to quality control made Pakistani products in the textile and light manufacturing areas more acceptable.

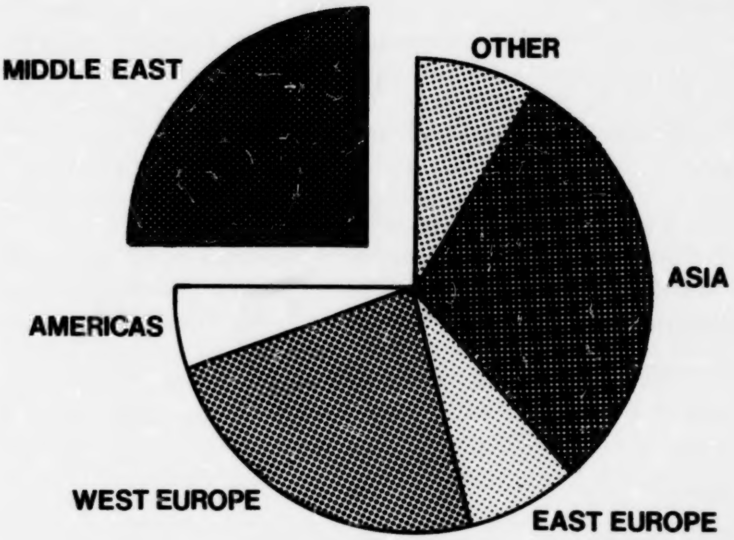
TABLE 1

PAKISTAN'S TRADE WITH THE MIDDLE EAST

(in millions of rupees)

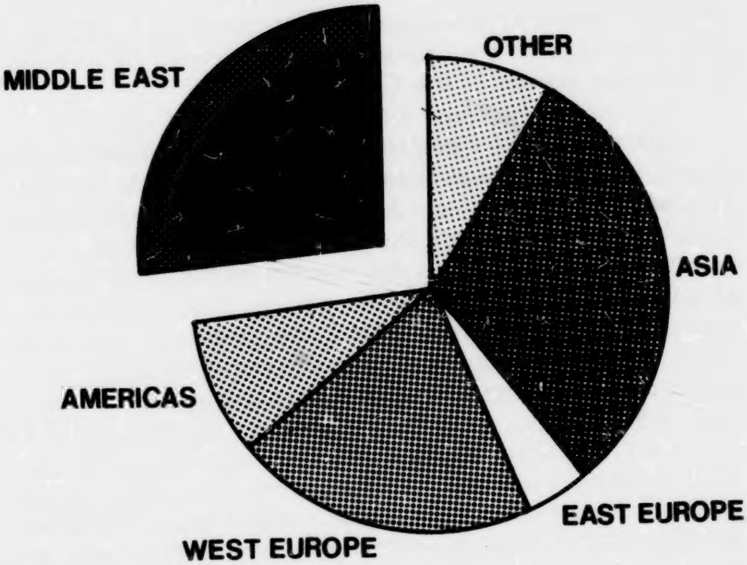
Country	**Exports**		**Imports**	
	1974/75	1981/82	1974/75	1981/82
Abu Dhabi	179	457	125	3184
Bahrain	42	117	57	8
Egypt	12	25	0	18
Iran	594	823	117	23
Iraq	313	652	118	2
Jordan	12	134	11	111
Kuwait	183	535	1224	5765
Lebanon	30	26	2	2
Libya	59	200	0	0
Oman	99	472	63	33
Qatar	36	160	20	60
Saudi Arabia	621	1938	1559	8497
Somalia	44	40	0	0
Turkey	6	59	21	282
United Arab Emirates	297	1011	119	754
Yemen Arab Republic	19	598	0	0

Source: *Pakistan Economic Survey, 1982–83*, pp. 172–173.



Source: Pakistan Economic Survey, 1982–83, Government of Pakistan, Economic Adviser's Wing, Finance Division, 1983.

Figure 1. Pakistani Exports—1974–1975



Source: Pakistan Economic Survey, 1982–83, Government of Pakistan, Economic Adviser's Wing, Finance Division, 1983.

Figure 2. Pakistani Exports—1981–1982

The relatively short distance made the shipment of perishable foodstuffs practicable. Pakistan also expanded services to the Middle East through its banking system and an expansion of sea and air shipping systems. For example, in addition to Karachi, direct air service is now available from airfields including Lahore, Rawalpindi-Islamabad, Peshwar, and Gwadur. Pakistan had earlier contributed to the banking and commercial air systems of the Gulf region, including the Bank of Commerce and Credit International, and was well placed in terms of geography, personnel, and religion to take advantage of the opportunities presented by increased commercial activity in the Gulf.

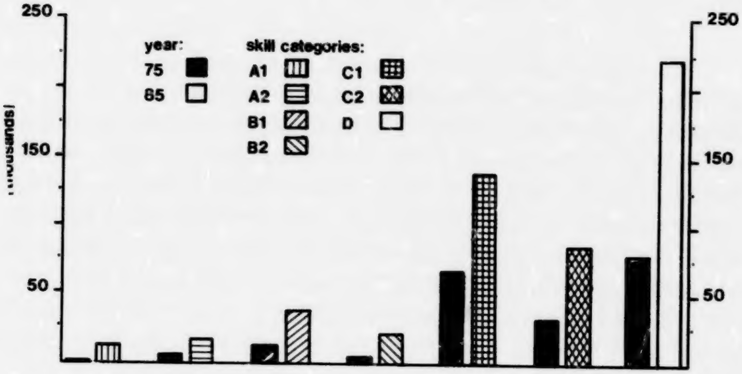
The volume of Pakistani trade with the Middle East is shown in Table 1. Significant increases in exports to almost all countries are indicated in the seven-year period from 1974/75 to 1981/82. There have been some shifts in imports resulting from changes in the sources of petroleum, almost all of which is supplied by the Middle East, some of it on concessional terms. Trade with Turkey and Iran is governed by the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) which began during the presidency of Ayub Khan and which was, in part, the regional economic cooperation counterpart of the Central Treaty Organization. Iran has not worked through RCD since its revolution, but Turkey remains active, as does Pakistan. Of the Gulf countries Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were among the first twenty in Pakistan export destinations in 1981/82. Most of the others were First World countries.[7] Figures I and II show the direction of Pakistani exports by region in 1974/75 and 1981/82, a period during which the volume of Pakistani exports expanded by more than two and one half times. Middle Eastern trade increased in rupee terms at a slightly higher rate than overall trade. It amounted to 25 percent in 1974/75 and only a slightly higher 26.9 percent in 1981/82.

Trade with the Middle East is of great importance to Pakistan and should Pakistani food grain and textile production continue to increase (with some weather-related variation in the former), the markets will be of ever-increasing importance. Wheat is exported to Iran as well as the GCC countries. One commentator believes that Pakistan may be able to use new-found influence in the Middle East "to calm the passions in a highly inflamed area" through its provision of what the Gulf states "sorely need—food and military manpower."[8]

EMPLOYMENT

Although Pakistanis had been employed in the Gulf region in considerable numbers before the sharp increase in oil prices, with the greatly increased revenues their numbers swelled and further increases are projected for the future.[9] Earlier employment of Pakistanis was often of highly skilled professionals, in such fields as medicine and banking, but since the mid-seventies there has been a sharp increase in the hiring of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers. Figure 3 shows the actual numbers in various employment categories in 1975 and the projected numbers in each field in 1985. The numbers in each group are given in Table 2.

Pakistanis, of course, are not the only migrant laborers employed in the Middle Eastern and North African countries. There are other Muslims drawn from Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Bangladesh, and elsewhere and non-Muslims coming from such countries as Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand. One of the elements which makes Pakistanis especially attractive—and this applies to the Pakistani military as well—is that they are Muslims, usually of the Sunni majority, but they are not Arabs and are therefore less likely to become involved in intra-Arab disputes. Bangladeshis might well qualify under these criteria but the pool of skilled and professional workers in Bangladesh is less than that in Pakistan and the delay in Arab recognition and establishment



Source: Extracted from Ismail Serageldin, James A. Socknat, Stace Birks, Bob Li, and Clive A. Sinclair, *Manpower and International Labor Migration in the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, for the World Bank, 1983), p. 51.

Figure 3. Manpower Exports—1975 and 1985.

TABLE 2

PAKISTANI EMPLOYMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

(number in thousands)

Category	**1975 Actual**		**1985 Projected**	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
A-1 Professional and technical	1.5	0.8	12.8	2.4
A-2 Other professional	5.5	2.7	17.9	3.3
B-1 Sub-professional and technical	12.6	6.1	38.2	7.1
B-2 Other sub-professional	4.8	2.3	21.7	4.0
C-1 Skilled office and manual	68.3	33.2	140.1	16.1
D Unskilled	80.4	39.1	223.6	41.2
TOTAL	205.7	100.0	541.3	100.0

Source: Extracted from Ismail Serageldin, James A. Socknat, Stace Birks, Bob Li and Clive A. Sinclair, *Manpower and International Labor Migration in the Middle East and North Africa,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983, for the World Bank), p. 51.

of diplomatic relations with Bangladesh after the country's breakaway from Pakistan gave Pakistan a clear head start. Muslims (and others) from India are also an important group, but preference is clearly given to Pakistan, which has proclaimed itself an Islamic state and is working toward the building of a nation based on Islamic law. As is shown in Table III, Pakistan trailed Egypt and the Yemen Arab Republic in the total work force in 1975 but is projected to surpass Yemen by 1985. (Unfortunately, the data from which this table is derived does not list Bangladesh separately but lumps that country with "rest of world".)

The ties between Pakistan and the Gulf area are both historic and more recently developed. Gwadur, a seaport on the Makran coast in Baluchistan, was part of the Omani sultanate from 1797 to 1958, when it was purchased by Pakistan; the hinterland of Gwadur has long been a recruiting ground for Omani soldiers. The city remains of such importance to Middle Eastern employment that there is a daily Pakistan International Airlines flight across the Gulf of Oman between Muscat and Gwadur. Beginning in the nineteenth century troops of the British Indian Army served in the Gulf when British relations with the area came under the jurisdiction of first Calcutta and then New Delhi. These troops were also a major element in the initially unsuccessful but later victorious Mesopotamian campaign during World War I. Many of these troops were Punjabi Mussalmans, recruited from the western districts of that province. Ties between the military recruiting areas, including Jhelum, Gujrat, Rawalpindi, Campbellpur, and Sargodha districts, and the Gulf have been expanded now to include civilian as well as military personnel. The Punjab in total is estimated to provide 70.4 percent of the total migrant workers, with Sind sending 14 percent, the Frontier 11.7 percent, and Baluchistan 3.9 percent.[10]

The motivation for such extensive migration—more than half a million workers and a total number (including family members) of almost two million according to one estimate

TABLE 3

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OF MIGRANT WORKERS

(numbers in thousands)

Country	**1975**		**1985**		**Change**
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**in Share**
Algeria	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0
Egypt	353.3	22.1	711.5	20.1	−2.0
India	141.9	8.9	360.7	10.2	+1.3
Iran	69.9	4.4	115.6	3.3	−1.1
Iraq	18.7	1.2	12.4	0.3	−0.9
Jordan	139.0	8.7	257.4	7.3	−1.4
Lebanon	28.4	1.8	70.4	2.0	+0.2
Morocco	2.2	0.1	12.5	0.3	+0.2
Oman	30.8	1.9	46.0	1.3	−0.6
Pakistan	205.7	12.8	541.3	15.3	+2.5
East Asia	20.5	1.3	370.5	10.4	+7.1
Sudan	26.0	1.6	88.1	2.5	+0.9
Syria	38.1	2.4	96.1	2.7	+0.3
Tunisia	29.3	1.8	62.8	1.8	0.0
Y.A.R.	328.5	20.5	400.8	11.3	−9.2
P.D.R.Y.	45.8	2.9	84.7	2.4	−0.5
Rest of World	122.4	7.6	317.3	8.8	+1.2
TOTAL	1600.8	100.0	3548.4	100.0	

Source: Developed from Seraqeldin et al, *Manpower and International Labor Migration in the Middle East and North Africa,* p. 51.

for 1985[11]—is not hard to find. The earnings of those Pakistanis in the Middle East greatly exceed earnings available to them in Pakistan. It cannot be assumed that all, or even many, migrants would be unemployed if they returned to Pakistan but they would, in many cases, displace persons already employed, adding to the burden of unemployment in Pakistan. Official data for 1974–75 states that unemployment was 1.7 percent of the work force of 20.42 million.[12] This figure seems understated to this observer and presumably excludes the serious problem of underemployment. The number of unemployed in that study (350,000) was reduced by 205,700 migrants in the Middle East[13] (as well as some elsewhere). The primary motivation for migration is the earning of substantially greater incomes. It is much less likely that potential unemployment in and of itself is a high motivation.

The remittances from Pakistani migrants have been a substantial factor in the Pakistani economy and have also placed important demands on the political system. Remittances in 1981/82 were estimated to be $2.1 billion through official banking channels[14] and to have grown to about $3.0 billion for the 1982/83 fiscal year.[15] In addition to banking channels, remittances arrive in Pakistan through informal bills of exchange *(hundis)*, via merchandise imports, in cash on visits home, and through postal system devices.[16] Official records of remittances through these non-banking channels are not kept but it may be that as much as 25 percent to 50 percent additional money is remitted, making the total remittances in 1982/83 perhaps $4.0 billion or more. This would be about one-sixth of the gross national product of Pakistan and would account for about $50 of the gross national product per capita of approximately $350 per year.[17] In addition there is undoubtedly some, but unmeasured, diversion of saved funds from Pakistan to foreign currency accounts in the Gulf or elsewhere.

The amount each worker remits is only partly dependent on his income. A study done in Pakistan for 1979 showed the following percentages of income which were remitted (presumably through official channels) for various categories of migrant workers: unskilled, 53 percent; skilled, 53 percent; professional, 46 percent; service and clerical, 56 percent; business, 41 percent; and others, 56 percent.[18] Although income was significantly higher for professional workers (about 117,600 rupees) than for unskilled workers (about 45,060 rupees) the remittance percentage for the latter was greater.[19] That most unskilled workers are unaccompanied by other members of the family and that they are likely to live in shared quarters explain the larger share of funds remitted by them.

The uses to which these remittances are put is important to Pakistani planners. The same study (for 1979) stated that 62.19 percent of the funds were allotted to consumption (recurring items, 57 percent; marriage expenses, 2.35 percent; consumer durables, 2.84 percent). Another 21.68 percent was used to purchase real estate (residential housing, 12.14 percent; house improvements, 2.27 percent; commercial real estate, 5.72 percent; agricultural land, 1.55 percent). Savings and investments accounted for 12.95 percent (agricultural investment, 3.3 percent; industrial and commercial investment, 8.21 percent; savings, 1.44 percent). The balance of 3.18 percent was labeled "residual."[20] There is a debate as to which of these expenditures can be considered "productive" and which "unproductive."[21] It must be noted however that even investment in jewelry may be "productive" since the seller must put the proceeds somewhere and this may well be "productive."

There are, in addition to the economic measures discussed in the studies cited, a number of important sociopolitical dimensions to the migrant remittance question. The writer was given a lengthy analysis (from his perspective) by the then minister of education. He said that, in the rural areas from which they had come, unskilled and semiskilled migrants who had become relatively well-to-do and who did not wish their children to suffer from the same educational shortcomings as they had were placing demands on the educational system for better facilities. The purchase of agricultural land by returning migrants has driven selling landowners into urban areas where additional demands are being placed on the limited resources of many Pakistani cities. Purchases of electrical equipment put new demands on electricity suppliers. The list could be expanded but the conclusion may well be that once they have seen Bahrain it will be difficult to keep them down on the farm or in the village in the way they lived before migration.

The migration of labor from Pakistan to the Middle East clearly gives that nation a major interest in the region. It can be assumed to be beneficial to the labor-importing countries to fill needs in their economies and to do so with workers who are less likely to be involved with local political issues than other Arabic-speakers and who hold, or are likely to hold, strong opinions on intra-Arab or intra-regional issues. In short, if the importing nations were not satisfied with the arrangement they could import from other sources. The question remains whether the import of workers from Pakistan is on balance beneficial to Pakistan. One key study states:

> the labor export from Pakistan to the Middle East has been beneficial to Pakistan's economy and may continue to be so provided skills are speedily replaced and remittances contribute to improving productive capacity.[22]

This seems a sound conclusion.

MILITARY MANPOWER EXPORTS

Partially related to civilian manpower exports is the stationing of Pakistani troops in the Middle East, in formation or in training or operating groups. At the beginning of this article it was noted that Pakistan may now be second only to

Cuba in export of its forces overseas. In addition to stationing troops abroad, Pakistan provides training facilities in Pakistan for military personnel from the region. Details on the numbers and even locations of these troops are difficult to come by as such information is not disclosed by the government of Pakistan. Nonetheless, assignments abroad are generally avidly sought. Payment is made in hard currency and is the military's means to salt away substantial funds for use at home or, one may be sure, for diverting to accounts outside Pakistan. For officers, such assignments may be part of the "ticket-punching" of a career and lead to advancement. It is not forgotten that President Zia ul-Haq served in Jordan.

The *Christian Science Monitor* article cited earlier estimated that some 30,000 Pakistan military personnel were serving abroad and that there are missions in 24 nations, many in the Middle East but at least one as far afield as Zimbabwe. The largest single group is the reported 20,000 men in Saudi Arabia.[23] A significant portion of these troops is said to be acting in the capacity of a bodyguard for the Saudi royal family and for the holy places at Mecca and Medina. In both cases, the Pakistanis are seen as loyal, disciplined, and unlikely to become involved in local issues. They would, for example, be used if there were a repetition of the November 1979 incident at the Grand Mosque in Mecca. (There have been questions raised as to the potential role of Pakistan troops should there be a succession dispute in Saudi Arabia; however, the careful manner in which a crown prince is designated as soon as his predecessor ascends the throne makes this question moot in present circumstances.)

Training facilities (often using more modern weapon systems) are available and equipment is often given for return to Pakistan. There have been reports that the Saudis and others have told Pakistan not to send Shia officers and men but this was denied to the writer by a senior Pakistani officer who has served in the Middle East. He did say that most governments have barred the assignment of Ahmediyyas, a sect now branded "non-Muslim" by Pakistan that has few remaining members in the Pakistani armed forces.

The other 10,000 or so Pakistani forces serving abroad are scattered in several countries, including some in the Gulf and Libya. In these countries the role seems mainly to be assisting in training and in logistics, although individual Pakistanis continue to serve as soldiers in Oman and in Abu Dhabi. It is reported that Pakistan Air Force personnel may be in operational roles.

An article in *Asia*, the publication of the Asia Society, quoted a Pakistani officer as stating that Pakisitan could occupy islands in the Strait of Hormuz, take over Char Bahar in Iran or assist Oman, but, he added, this could only be done if Pakistan were not on guard against a threat from either the Soviets in Afghanistan or India.[24] Despite this bravado it seems likely that international conflict in the Gulf area would not involve Pakistani troops except by accident and that they would be withdrawn quickly.

ISLAMIC TIES

A third measure of the importance of the Middle East to the Pakistanis in general, and the Gulf in particular, is the obvious religious ties. This need not be given much space here except to note that Pakistan is seeking the credentials of an Islamic state. Earlier steps (e.g., prohibition) were taken by Bhutto, largely as part of his defense against protesters, following the rigged election of 1977, but they have been followed up strenuously by Zia ul-Haq, who overthrew Bhutto in a military coup in July 1977. Bhutto, during his presidency/prime ministership (1971–1977), also used Islamic ties to greatly extend Pakistan's political and economic links with the Arab nations. Zia has built upon this as well.

As noted earlier, Pakistan wishes to have the support of the Islamic nations and will afford them its support on issues which do not deal with intra-Arab or intra-Islamic rivalries. Zia has attempted to serve as a mediator in the Iran-Iraq war without success. He has also spoken out against exclusiveness when this seemed necessary as when, as noted above, he joined Sekou Toure in supporting the readmission of Iran and Egypt at the 1984 Casablanca summit.

It is important to note that the ties are primarily religious and economic, and only secondarily political. It is not likely that Pakistan would use its military forces to assist either side in a dispute between or among Muslim nations. Pakistan's role has been and will be mediatory to the extent that such disputes are subject to mediation.

PAKISTAN'S FUTURE IN THE GULF

Pakistan's interests in the Middle East and the Gulf region are many and varied. Despite General Trixier's expressed opinion, which presumably reflects that of the United States government, it is very unlikely that Pakistan will willingly become involved in any of the possible scenarios for conflict in that area and it would, if at all possible, withdraw its forces before they became involved. It would also try to withdraw civilians although that might not be feasible. For example, Pakistanis have been casualties in the Iran-Iraq war and in the Lebanese conflict.

Pakistan, it seems, assumes that once a conflict is resolved, the need for its civilian migrants would once more arise and many would be called back. This might also be true of military forces. A Soviet takeover would present a different situation, but such an attempt by the Soviet Union has so many possible outcomes that the question of the role of Pakistani civilians becomes virtually irrelevant.

It seems to the writer that the policy implications are clear. Despite testimony given before the Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, which implied the contrary, the United States cannot and should not rely on Pakistan to play a role in the Gulf conflict. Conversely, it would also appear that any Pakistani reliance on direct US involvement in a conflict with the Soviet Union would be unwarranted. The record does not support the latter; this analysis does not support the former.

ENDNOTES

1. *Christian Science Monitor*, 3 October, 1983.

2. Quoted in *Pakistan Affairs*, vol. 37, no. 5, 1 March 1984, p. 3.

3. The possible role of the Soviets in Pakistan is discussed in Selig S. Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, (New York and Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1981).

4. See Rounaq Jahan, *Pakistan: Failure in National Integration*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), and Craig Baxter, "Pakistan and Bangladesh," in Frederick L. Shiels, ed., *Ethnic and World Politics*, (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1984).

5. *Washington Post*, 27 January 1984.

6. M.G. Weinbaum and Gautam Sen, "Pakistan Enters the Middle East," *Orbis*, vol. 22, no. 3, fall 1978.

7. *Europa Yearbook, 1983*, (London: Europe Publications, 1983), p. 1182.

8. Khalid B. Sayeed, "Pakistan in 1983," *Asian Survey*, vol. 24, no. 2, February 1984, p. 228.

9. See Ismail Serageldin, James A. Socknat, Stace Birks, Bob Li and Clive A. Sinclair, *Manpower and International Labor Migration in the Middle East and North Africa*, (New York: Oxford University Press, for the World Bank, 1983). Other studies of the labor migration issue include: Ijaz Gilani, M. Fahim Khan, and Munawar Iqbal, *Labour Migration from Pakistan to the Middle East and its Impact on the Domestic Economy*, (Islamabad: Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, June 1981, Research Report Series No. 126), and Isabelle Tsakok, "The Export of Manpower from Pakistan to the Middle East, 1975–1985" *World Development*, vol. 10, no. 4, 1982. Also: Isabelle Tsakok's article with the same title but updated and Stephen E. Guisinger, "The Impact of Temporary Worker Migration in Pakistan," both in S. Javed Burki and Robert LaPorte, Jr.,

Pakistan's Development Priorities: Choices for the Future, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1984).

10. Gilani et al., p. 10.

11. Serageldin et al., p. 59.

12. Gilani et al., p. 14.

13. Serageldin et al., p. 59.

14. Tsakok, "The Export of Manpower," p. 323.

15. Budget speech of Finance Minister Ghulam Ishaque Khan, 14 June 1982. Text in *The Muslim* (Islamabad), 15 June 1982.

16. Guisinger, "The Impact of Worker Migration" (cited from manuscript).

17. *World Development Report, 1983,* (New York: Oxford University Press, for the World Bank, 1983), p. 148.

18. Calculated from data in Gilani et al., p. 105.

19. Gilani et al.

20. Gilani et al.

21. Gilani et al. "The Impact of Worker Migration." p. 115, and Guisinger.

22. Tsakok, *"The Export of Manpower."*

23. Sayeed, *"Pakistan in 1983,"* p. 28, citing *The Military Balance, 1983–84,* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1983), p. 97 and *The Christian Science Monitor,* 3 October 1983.

24. Fergus M. Bordewich, "The Pakistan Army: Sword of Islam," *Asia,* vol. 5, no. 3, September–October 1982.

Chapter 6

IRAQI MILITARY POLICY: FROM ASSERTIVENESS TO DEFENSE

John Devlin

HUSSEIN'S IRAQ

Five years ago Iraq was an assertive, increasingly influential state, playing a leading role in Arab councils. Its military forces, which had doubled in size in the half-dozen years following an undistinguished showing by Iraqi forces on the Syrian front against Israel in October 1973, put weight behind its aspirations for leadership. Today those forces are doggedly defending the country's borders against recurrent attacks by Iran. The leadership is desperate to conclude a cease-fire with Iran, but the latter has so far refused, except on terms that include the demise of the current regime.

Two events which occurred in 1979 led to this situation. The fall of the Shah and the establishment of an Islamic Republic in Iran opened a new chapter in a story of centuries-old hostility; the powers that have controlled, respectively, the Iranian plateau and the Mesopotamian plains have more often than not been at odds. Second, a dynamic, ambitious, ruthless man, the 42 year-old Saddam Hussein, became sole ruler of Iraq. Together these events brought about war and led, in time, to the defensive policy Iraq has been following for nearly two years.

THE MILITARY BUILDUP

A foreign war is an uncharacteristic occurrence for the Iraqi armed forces, and the contemporary one with Iran is by far the largest conflict that they have been involved in during their sixty-odd years of existence. It dwarfs any of the campaigns to maintain internal security against Kurdish separatists, even that of 1974–75 which cost 16,000 casualties.[1] Iraqi forces have been involved in border incidents with all of the country's neighbors at one time or another, but these have been on a small scale. Iraqi troops have participated in the major Arab-Israeli wars; participation was minor when compared to that of the states directly fronting on Israel. Iraqi troops held a static section of the West Bank front in 1948-49, had insufficient time to reach the front in the 1967 Six Day War, and were involved in small actions in October 1973.

The Baath regime, which seized power in 1968, undertook to expand and strengthen the country's military forces. By 1973 these totaled just over 100,000; in 1978 they reached 222,000. Arms agreements with the USSR permitted commensurate increases in ground equipment, aircraft, and naval vessels.[2] By the time Saddam Hussein became president, commander-in-chief, and head of the Iraqi Baath Party in July 1979, Iraq's military strength was sufficient to put some obvious muscle behind Iraqi diplomatic initiatives and its desire for Arab leadership.

As early as the mid-1970s, the Baath regime felt free to pursue broader aims in the region.[3] The last serious coup attempt against it had been snuffed out in 1973; a drastic jump in oil revenues beginning in 1974 gave it the money to simultaneously expand its armed forces and greatly speed up economic development; agreement with the Shah in March 1975 enabled Baghdad to snuff out the Kurdish rebellion. Mulla Mustafa Barzani's forces had returned to the battlefield in

1974; Iran's closure of its borders denied them needed support. The growing economy and expanding armed forces were at the service of an expansionist policy, expansionist to be understood as exerting influence on neighboring states, not as territorial aggrandizement. (As with all generalizations, there is an exception; Iraq did try, unsuccessfully, to force Kuwait to cede a small amount of territory in the mid-1970s.) In its early years the Baath regime had promoted the establishment and growth of revolutionary Baath groups in the Gulf states. As the staying power of the Gulf regimes became apparent, Baghdad shifted to promoting state-to-state relations and sought a larger formal role in the area. The Gulf states rebuffed Iraq when it advocated the formation of a security grouping in 1975, but the general tenor of relations has improved year by year.

The Baath regime has been vigorously and consistently opposed to Israel, usually aligning itself with the maximalist factions within the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). It did not join the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front—Syria, Libya, Algeria, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, and the PLO—formed in December 1977 after Anwar Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. It consistently spoke of its growing armed forces as destined for battle with Israel. Immediately following the Israeli-Egyptian accords of Camp David, Iraq seized the initiative in isolating and punishing Sadat. At a summit in Baghdad (November 1978) and a follow-up foreign ministers meeting in April 1979, Iraq established itelf as the chief contender for Egypt's mantle as the leading Arab state. Using an adroit mixture of patriotic appeal, example, and veiled threats of strong-arm action against the recalcitrant, the Iraqis persuaded their brother states to expel Egypt from the Arab League, stop economic dealings with it, and promise some $4 billion in subsidies yearly to Syria, Jordan, and the PLO.

Also during the mid-1970s Iraq embarked on a project that had military potential. In 1976 it agreed to purchase from

France a 70 megawatt (thermal) nuclear reactor to be built at its research site near Baghdad. In the same year, Italy signed a multi-year agreement with Iraq under which it would provide a process for separating plutonium from used reactor fuel rods. Although neither the reactor nor the Italian process was optimally designed for the production of weapons-grade plutonium, suspicions were aroused that Iraq intended to try and develop nuclear explosives. "There is a wealth of evidence to support a conclusion that the Iraqi nuclear research center at Tuwaitha was engaged in a clandestine effort to acquire the capability for bomb production."[4] Israeli aircraft bombed and destroyed the reactor on 7 June 1981. Hesitation on the part of the European suppliers put off any early attempt at rebuilding the reactor, and Iraq's financial problems growing out of the cost of the war with Iran very quickly made it financially out of the question to try to rebuild. Because the reactor was destroyed before it went into operation, and therefore long before it could have produced plutonium for weapons, Iraq's actual military intent—including the nature of weapons and delivery systems—remains unclear.

SADDAM AND THE AYATOLLAH

Saddam Hussein was the most important man in the Iraqi power structure long before he took over the offices of president, commander-in-chief, and Baath Party head from Ahmad Hasan Bakr on 16 July 1979. (He is secretary of the Baath Party in Iraq, although only deputy secretary general of the National—pan-Arab—Command of the Party, a figurehead organization.) A militant party activist who first came to notice in 1959 as a member of a team which failed to assassinate then Prime Minister Abd al-Karim Qasim, he rose rapidly during the party restructuring of the 1960s. He was Bakr's right-hand man from 1968 on. Young, more vigorous, in good health, Saddam Hussein gradually took over from Bakr—who was a relative, as well as his Baath Party superior.

Although he had a free hand and saw eye-to-eye with Bakr in most matters, he could not override the latter when they did differ. Bursting with desire to run the country in his own fashion, Saddam seized the opportunity afforded by differences of view in the Iraqi leadership over relations with Syria to persuade Bakr to retire from public life.[5]

Saddam's aspirations for Iraq were extensive. Domestically, they centered on forced-draft economic development directed from the very center of power. A strong coercive force was needed to prevent factionalism, indifference, or variations in approach from getting in the way of the regime's programs. A security apparatus was available and used, as was the Baath Party and its allied "people's" organizations for various occupational and citizen groups. A substantial part of the now large military forces remained garrisoned in the Kurdish area to discourage a renewal of revolt. Externally, the new president's goals were to make Iraq the leader among the Arab nations. To him and his colleagues this was an achievable goal. In modern times, however, only Egypt has been able to achieve preeminence among the Arab states. When it has chosen not to do so (or has been prevented), others have competed for its mantle. None has succeeded in wearing it.

Military policy was an essential element in Iraq's broader Middle Eastern aims. The Iraqi leader's public statements consistently described the armed forces as having Arab world responsibilities. "We want an army for Arabism, Iraq and the Baath,"[6] Saddam said only a few weeks after taking charge of the country. A few weeks later he asserted that, "the army is entrusted first with pan-Arab tasks and then with national tasks."[7] These were not isolated expressions. The theme of the Iraqi armed forces fighting for the Arab nation and Arabism is repeated in uncounted speeches and public statements justifying and explaining Iraq's prosecution of the war against Iran.[8]

On 8 February 1980 President Saddam Hussein announced an eight-point "charter to regulate relations among the Arab countries." It had a distinctly military tone, calling for rejection of foreign bases and forces in the Arab area and for Arab states not to participate in military conflicts on behalf of a foreign state (points 1 and 6). It banned Arab states from using force against one another and applied his ban on the use of force against states bordering on Arab lands except in self-defense (points 2 and 3; Israel was excluded from such states). It called for Arab solidarity against foreign aggression (point 4).[9] Response among Arab states was restrained. Some approved, a handful did not; most took the view that Iraq was merely restating principles already accepted in such agreements as the Arab Collective Security Pact. After hinting that a special Arab summit might be convened to approve the proposed charter and trying unsuccessfully to drum up interest in it at a Pan-Arab People's Conference in Baghdad in late March, Iraq allowed the idea to drop.[10]

Given the nature of Iraq's relations with its Arab neighbors, the use it intended in its buildup of forces is clear. It had consistently taken a strong line against Israel and made at least token participation in the major wars against it. There is no doubt that Iraq intended to develop the capability to participate more extensively in future wars, which it fully expected to occur. Vis-a-vis Arab states, Baghdad's military might was to bolster political moves, not for serious warfare. Its military forces were far superior to those of its Gulf neighbors; the charter was probably intended in part as an assurance of Iraq's benign intentions toward them. Open warfare with Syria, even though the two had long been antagonists, would, in the absence of severe provocation, have greatly damaged Iraq's efforts to take Egypt's place at the head of the Arab state system. With Turkey, Iraq had enjoyed good relations for half a century.

Iran was the other logical potential battlefield enemy. The Shah's military buildup, fueled by massive oil revenues, had gone much farther than Iraq's. Iran's military superiority and the potential for damage to each country's petroleum installations in the event of hostilities were powerful factors in bringing the two parties to an accommodation in 1975. Iraq probably gave little credence to the Shah's concerns that Iran had to defend itself from potential enemies everywhere it looked.[11] Within a year after the Shah fell, Iraqi leaders began to explain their acceptance of Iran's terms in the 1975 agreement as compelled by a dire shortage of arms needed to prosecute the spring campaign against Kurdish rebels.[12]

There is no apparent evidence which would indicate that the Iraqi leadership had any suspicion of a major change in their relations with Iran during the year 1978, when the forces of opposition grew and finally brought down the Shah. Indeed, a "senior Iraqi official," interviewed by Nasir al-Din al-Nashashibi in late January 1979, offered the view that an Iranian general—the implication was that he could be one of a number of such figures—could restore order in Iran without much trouble after a period of turmoil.[13] He could not have been more wrong. A seventy-eight-year-old Shia religious leader living in exile outside Paris had different ideas—and much power, besides.

Only a few months before the collapse of the imperial regime in Iran, Ayatollah Ruhallah Khomeini was expelled from Iraq, where he had been living in the Shia shrine city of Najaf since the mid-1960s. Over the years, Khomeini developed very strong notions of what a proper Islamic form of government should be. Exiled from Iran for opposition to the Shah, he observed the Iraqi Baath system while teaching jurisprudence in the Shia theological school in Najaf. Khomeini did not approve of the secular system that the Baath Party had installed, regarding it as a totally inappropriate government for Muslims to live under. His dislike was intensified by his expulsion from Iraq at the Shah's request, a move for which Khomeini has held Saddam Hussein personally responsible. When Khomeini returned to Iran as the leader of the post-Shah Islamic regime, the stage was set for conflict between the two countries.

For a year and a half, relations between Iraq and Iran gradually worsened, following a pattern of interstate squabbling that had marked Iraq's relations with Iran—and also with other neighbors—at other times. Each suspected the other of carrying out subversive activities: Tehran blamed the Iraqis for fomenting disturbances in the province of Khuzistan; Baghdad reacted adversely to Khomeini's advice that a senior Shia cleric remain in Iraq rather than move to Iran, seeing it as an interference in domestic affairs.[14] By mid-June 1979 Iraq placed the cleric under arrest, and the Iranian press began to disparage "the anti-Islamic and anti-people Baathist regime of Iraq."[15] The levels of invective increased with the passage of time. In addition to a role in the continuing disturbances in Khuzistan, Iran saw an "Iraqi hand behind . . . fighting between the Kurds and the Revolutionary Guard," while Iraq found Iran responsible for agitation and ferment among its Shia population.[16]

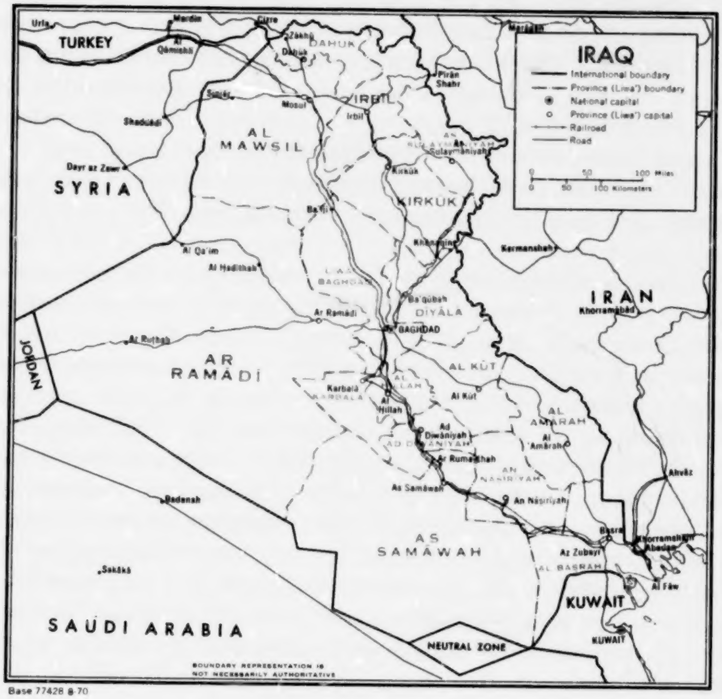
Concern over Iranian efforts to convert the loyalty of Iraq's Shiite population from Baghdad to an Islamic form of government, combined with the manifest incapacity of the Khomeini regime to establish control in the period after the fall of the Shah, presented a temptation that Saddam Hussein and his government could not resist. They determined to recover sovereignty over the Shatt al-Arab, which had been divided since 1975. More importantly, the Iraqis saw an opportunity to inflict on Iran a defeat so devastating that it would lead to the fall of the Islamic republic.

On 7 September 1984, against a background of increasingly extensive border clashes, Baghdad charged that Iran had not returned some small parcels of land stipulated in the 1975 agreement. Before Iran replied to the Iraqi charges, the latter's forces seized the disputed territory on 10 September. Fighting expanded to other areas along the border, and on 17 September Saddam Hussein abrogated the 1975 agreement on the grounds that Iran had not lived up to its provisions.[17] On 22 September Iraqi mechanized and armored forces drove into Iran, expecting a quick and easy victory. The Iranians themselves had small expectations of being able to put up a successful resistance.[18]

By invading a neighboring country on a large scale—moving well beyond the traditional border incursion—Iraq effected a major change in its military policy. The Iraqi armed forces were being employed to bring about a change in the government of Iran. Iraqi claims that its forces were responding to an attempted invasion have no credibility; Iranian forces were not positioned for such an operation. Restoration of territory claimed by Iraq was not an issue; an Iraqi spokesman on 10 September said that all territory Iraq claimed had already been occupied.[19] Iraqi forces were being employed in an aggressive move against a neighbor. Admittedly, a major purpose was defensive; that is, to eliminate the government and system that called for the demise of the Baath regime and stirred up Iraqi citizens to revolt.

The course of the war is well known. In the first weeks Iraqi forces seized several thousand square miles but stopped well short of cutting the rail, road, and pipeline links from the head of the Gulf north to Tehran. Nor did they block the valleys these routes ran through. A stalemate persisted from November 1980 until late spring 1981 when the Iranians went on the offensive to push the Iraqis back.

After several defeats in the latter half of 1981 and in 1982, Baghdad announced on 20 June 1982 that it was pulling its forces back to the international border to show that it had no designs on Iranian territory and was more than ready for a cease-fire. Since then, the Iranians have made several attempts to smash through the Iraqi defenses; each effort has


IRAQ
International boundary
Province (Liwa') boundary
National capital
Province (Liwa') capital
Railroad
Road
0 50 100 Miles
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TURKEY
SYRIA
JORDAN
IRAN
KUWAIT
SAUDI ARABIA
NEUTRAL ZONE
DAHUK
IRBIL
AL MAWSIL
KIRKUK
AS SULAYMANIYAH
BAGHDAD
DIYALA
AR RAMADI
AL KUT
AL HILLAH
KARBALA
AD DIWANIYAH
AL AMARAH
AN NASIRIYAH
AS SAMAWAH
AL BASRAH
Mosul
Irbil
Kirkuk
Bayji
Ba'qubah
Ar Ramadi
Karbala
Al Hillah
Al Kut
Ad Diwaniyah
Ar Rumaythah
As Samawah
An Nasiriyah
Al 'Amarah
Basra
Az Zubayr
Al Faw
Khorramshahr
Abadan
Ahvaz
Khorramabad
Kermanshah
Khanaqin
Piran Shahr
Zakho
Dahuk
Sinjar
Al Qa'im
Al Hadithah
Ar Rutbah
Badanah
Sakaka
Dayr az Zawr
Shaddadi
Al Qamishli
Mardin
Cizre
Urfa
BOUNDARY REPRESENTATION IS NOT NECESSARILY AUTHORITATIVE

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had some success at great cost in lives. The offensive in February 1984 was typical: losing thousands of men, Iran seized the artificially built-up oil production islands of Majnun in the Huwayzab marsh area, but failed to cut the Basra-Qurnah-Amarah-Baghdad road.

Historians, strategists, and the like may argue for decades over the reasons for Iraq's failure to achieve its goals by military action. However, the direction and length of the unsuccessful campaign has implications for Iraqi military policy, and an attempt to lay out some of the reasons for failure is therefore warranted. Among them are:

- Insufficient appreciation of the strength of the Islamic forces in Iran. Iraq's Baathist leaders had a contempt matching that of the late Shah for the backward-looking Shia religious leaders. Even after the November 1979 ousting of Prime Minister Bazargan, who attempted to wed Islamic practices and modern methods, the Iraqis did not become alert to Khomeini's strength.

- Civil direction of the Iraqi military. This is a more problematic issue, because we know little of the mechanics of defense policy. The Baath Party after 1968 placed the Iraqi military under party control. The failure of the Iraqis to even attempt to seize, say, the major communication junction of Ahwaz indicates that professionally trained officers were not making the decisions in the field.

- Saddam Hussein's steam-roller personality and unwillingness to entertain opinions differing from his own had combined to galvanize many domestic programs. Those same strengths applied to a field where he did not control all the levers and switches contributed to Iraq "biting off more than it could chew."

IMPACT OF THE WAR

Iraq's military buildup through the 1970s had been financed by oil exports. Crude oil production rose from two million barrels a day (b/d) in 1973 to 2.5 million b/d in 1978, then jumped by an additional million b/d in 1979 as Iranian exports slumped.[20] Exports were over 3 million b/d, and 1979 price increases, occasioned by a tight oil market, dramatically boosted Iraqi revenues to an annual rate of about $30 billion. In the first weeks of the war, Iraqi oil export capacity was cut by over two-thirds as Iranian attacks put the offshore loading platforms at the head of the Gulf out of use and damaged other oil installations. Iraqi exports dropped to well under a million b/d. Bolstered by large foreign exchange reserves and confident of a quick victory, the Baghdad regime pressed forward on a guns *and* butter policy throughout 1981. Beginning in early 1981, it started to solicit—and receive—financial help from Arab Gulf states in order to keep both sides of the policy going.

By the beginning of 1982, it had become necessary for the regime to tighten up on non-military expenditures. The defeats of that spring increased the pressure to trim projects not related to the war. Syria's closure of the pipeline that transported Iraqi oil to the Mediterranean further cut Iraqi exports to 700,000 b/d, worth about $8 billion. Even with substantial help from Arab Gulf states, which totalled $19 billion in 1981, this fell far short of Iraq's proposed 1982 budget of $49 billion.[21]

Cutting expenditures became a vital necessity. As the war continues to drag on, Iraq has taken steps to increase its foreign exchange revenue. Work during 1983-84 will raise the capacity of its one functioning export outlet, the pipeline through Turkey to the Mediterranean, to about a million b/d by mid-1984. An agreement with Saudi Arabia permits Iraq to utilize the unused capacity of the Petroline to the Red Sea.

Iraq hopes to find the money to build a tie-in from its fields to this line and to export up to 500,000 b/d through it.[22] Iraq also has Saudi agreement to build a 1.6 million b/d line to the Red Sea, but it will be a long time before it can finance such an extensive project. It also envisages a line through Jordan to Aqaba, for which Jordan has given approval.

The shift of emphasis from a quick campaign that would destroy Khomeini, through a year-long stalemate, followed by a series of defeats and retreats ending at the international border, to the situation that has prevailed since mid-1982 of dogged defense of the homeland has had widespread domestic repercussions. Consider the impact on the domestic workforce: taking as a rough estimate that a third of the People's Army are either in training or supporting the regular forces at any given time, adding those in the regular forces, plus an officially admitted 50,000 prisoners in Iran, plus an estimated 100,000 dead or disabled, a total of 800,000 men, or approximately 20-25 percent of the workforce, are unavailable. It is likely, though there are no statistics, that those subtracted from the civilian workforce include a disproportionate share of Iraq's educated, skilled, and semi-skilled people.

Manpower Under Arms[23]

	1978	*1980*	*1983*
Armed forces	212,000	242,000	500,000
People's Army	75,000	230,000	450,000

The strains on the workforce base show up in two areas. First, in the large number of expatriates working in Iraq—estimates run as high as 1.5 million. Second, in the development of the People's Army from a militia closely tied to the Baath Party organization to the mass organization of today. Students were permitted to join the People's Army in 1981, and 30,000 Kurds were enrolled that year.[24]

The exigencies of war have also brought about a shrinking of the inner circle of the Party command grouped around Saddam Hussein. In a regime where secrecy is rigidly enforced and where ordinary economic information is kept confidential, internal decision making and policy making can only be deduced from public announcements. In June 1982, just before announcing the withdrawal of Iraqi forces to the international border, a special meeting of the Baath Party Regional Congress voted to drop seven members from the Party Command and from the Revolutionary Command Council, the government body that is the highest executive-level institution. Those chosen to replace the dropped party officials were not put on the RCC, which since then has numbered only nine men. One of those dropped was executed: the official reason given was that as minister of health, he imported drugs that caused the death of soldiers. Other sources report that he suggested that Saddam Hussein resign in order to create the conditions for a cease-fire with Iran.[25]

The tightening of Iraq's leadership took place just after the regime's decision to seek a cease-fire. Saddam Hussein took some pains to associate the military command with the decision to pull Iraqi forces back to the border. The Iraqi News Agency was uncharacteristically explicit when it reported that "the national and regional commands of the Arab Socialist Baath party and the Revolutionary Command Council held an expanded meeting . . . (which) also was attended by . . . members of the Armed Forces General Command."[26] This meeting announced Iraq's readiness for a cease-fire; to pull back its forces to the international border; and, if necessary, to accept binding arbitration of the dispute. Other Iraqi statements of that month are worded so as to give an impression of consultation between President Saddam and military commanders in regard to the pull-backs.

In the succeeding months, there have been indications of the increased importance of the senior members of the military establishment. A corps commander, Hisham Sabah Fakhri, was named to head the intelligence apparatus after Saddam's half-brother was ousted from the post in October 1983. General Fakhri has since returned to take command of the "east of Tigris forces" facing the Iranian attackers in February 1984.[27] Over all, the reporting through 1983 and into 1984 has given more—albeit not an enormous amount more—prominence to the several Iraqi corps commanders than was the case in the early years of the war.

This move of senior military officers toward the decision making political center is in keeping with the traditional role of the Iraqi military establishment. The strict subordination to party rule, which the Baath regime imposed on the military after it seized power in 1968, is an exception to the involvement in coups, direct rule, and participation in politics that have characterized it since the 1930s. Greater participation in government, should that develop to a significant degree, will have effects on the formulation of military policy, as it has done in the past.[28]

The war with Iran has affected the way in which Baghdad deals with domestic opposition. As the demands of the conflict came to require Baghdad to draw increasing numbers of its troops from their normal garrisons in Kurdistan, militant opposition has grown. The fragmented state of the Kurdish separatist movement has limited the pressure it has been able to bring on the regime. Nonetheless, the regime has felt compelled to make a major concession to its military security policy. In May 1983, it invited Turkey to send forces into Iraq to strike at the base areas of the principal opposition forces in the north, which operate under the Democratic National Front and are known separately as the Kurdish Democratic Party, the Iraqi Communist Party, and United Socialist Party of Kurdistan. The Turks, concerned at the spillover effect of Kurdish activity on their own population, complied.[29] This ran directly counter to article one of Saddam Hussein's charter of February 8, 1980, which rejected "the facilitation of the presence of any foreign armies, bases or armed forces in the Arab homeland, under any pretext and guise and for any reasons."[30] The invitation to Turkish troops to conduct military operations on Iraqi soil, even for Iraq's advantage, is evidence of the stress under which Baghdad is operating.

Concern over the potential of the Khomeini regime for stirring up dissension among Iraq's own Shia population was a major reason for Saddam's decision to invade Iran. An Iraqi Shiite organization named *al-Da'wah al-Islamiyah* (The Islamic Call),[31] founded in the late 1960s, was banned from Iraq in 1980. It is directed nowadays from Iranian soil by an Iraqi Shia, Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, under the umbrella of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq, and undertakes guerrilla activities against the Baath regime. Successes have been relatively few, and the Shia population, which has traditionally provided the bulk of the enlisted men in the Iraqi army, has so far not participated in large-scale dissension. The regime's combination of repression of any dissidence and distribution of economic goods among Shias has been effective.

However, the long-term viability of the current leadership group in Iraq—and perhaps of the system itself—is questionable. In the first weeks of the war, Iraqi spokesmen were extolling the patriotic virtues; with relatively low casualities, the war had little effect on domestic life. As of March 1984, there is a report that soldiers are being offered safe rear echelon positions in return for signing up as members of the Baath Party and are compelled to serve at the front if they do not.[32] If this report is representative of the regime's behavior, it can only be harmful to the reputation and acceptability of a revolutionary party seeking to attract the commitment of the Iraqi people.

EFFECTS ON EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

When the war began, Baghdad's relations with Moscow were already strained because of the Baath regime's harsh treatment of the Iraqi Communist Party and because of Iraq's public opposition to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The USSR suspended arms shipments to Iraq for a considerable time. After a year or so, it began to allow some war material to go to Iraq, but only resumed large-scale supply when Iraqi forces were clearly on the defensive. Since 1980, Iraq has ordered some $10 billion in arms from the USSR and more than twice that amount from the West.[33] In the meantime, Iraq turned to other suppliers, reenforcing a trend initiated in the mid-1970s. France is a major supplier of aircraft, helicopters and missiles with sales since September 1980 amounting to $5.6l billion.[34]

Political relations between Iraq and the USSR have improved markedly in the past year or so. The twelfth anniversary of the Soviet-Iraqi Friendship and Cooperation Treaty was celebrated with greater warmth in 1984 than it had been in several years.[35] The improvement coincided with a severe crackdown by the Khomeini regime on the Tudeh Party, involving arrests, public confessions, trials, and convictions of its leadership. Ties between Iraq and the USSR are likely to improve further if Iraqi-US relations weaken as a result of the chemical warfare issue.

Iraq's bid to head the Non-Aligned Movement fell victim to its failure in the war against Iran. Baghdad was chosen in 1979 as the site of the 1982 triennial meeting. Despite Iraq's best efforts to convince the Non-Aligned Conference membership to adhere to the original plan, a number of them felt it would be unsuitable to have the meeting hosted by a member state engaged in open warfare with another member state. After holding out until close to meeting time, Iraq finally bowed to other states' views, and the meeting was held in India.

Iraq's position in regard to Egypt has changed 180 degrees since the war began. Iraq has gone from leading the Arab opposition to the Camp David Agreements and the Egyptian-Israeli treaty in 1978-1979 to leading the movement to re-integrate Egypt into Arab and Islamic councils. At the mid-January 1984 meeting of 42 Islamic countries, Iraq, in the person of vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council Izzat Ibrahim, not only voted with the majority for the unconditional return of Egypt to the Islamic Conference Organization but spoke forcefully in favor of such a return.[36] In March, First Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yasin Ramadan, toward the conclusion of a cordial four-day visit to Baghdad by the Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister, proposed a conciliatory formula under which Egypt could be readmitted to the Arab League.[37] Egypt has for some time been a staunch supporter of Iraqi integrity against Iranian attacks and had sold arms to Iraq even before Anwar Sadat's death.

Relations between Iraq and the Arab states of the Gulf have undergone extensive and complex changes as a consequence of the conflict. Concerned by the Khomeini regime's insistent proclamation that its form of Islamic rule is the only acceptable one, the six Arab Gulf states formed the Gulf Cooperation Council in 1981. A central feature of the Council is the ongoing attempt by the several states to develop and coordinate their own defense policies. The Gulf states have supported Iraq from the beginning in the war with Iran. They have made available more than $20 billion in loans or gifts; Kuwait has provided port facilities; Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are allowing the revenue from 300,000 b/d of their crude oil production to be sold for Iraq's account.[38] This is worth some $2.7 billion annually in foreign exchange receipts.

Yet there remains an ambivalence in the Gulf states' attitudes toward Iraq. They rejected Iraqi efforts as early as 1975 to take a leading part in a Gulf security organization. Their foreign ministers were much put out by what amounted to Iraqi dictation of the anti-Egyptian measures that the April 1979 foreign ministers conference took. The six states which formed the Gulf Cooperation Council in 1981 pointedly excluded Iraq, in part because of Iraq's past record of attempting to extend influence down the Gulf. They also did not wish to link themselves formally with a state of war with Iran for that could have brought them directly into the conflict. Iraq's failure with respect to Iran has, by exposing its own limitations and by heightening the risk of the small states becoming directly involved, sharply cut its influence in the Gulf.

IRAQ'S PROBLEM

Baghdad has proved unable either to persuade Iran to stop fighting or to make the war so costly that it would agree to a cease-fire. Baghdad's threats to stop Iranian oil exports from the major shipping port of Kharg Island have not been carried out. A few attacks have been made, but they were not pressed home and relatively little damage has been done. Since early February 1984, Iraq has concentrated its efforts on repelling large-scale Iranian attacks in the area between Basra and Amarah. The possibility of a decisive battle is present.

The options available to the Baath regime in this situation are extremely limited. Needing the support of Arab states willing and able to provide money, arms, and manpower to take the place of Iraqis in uniform, it has been compelled to adopt the policy lines of such influential states as Egypt and Saudi Arabia. This requirement accounts for Iraq's leading role in reintegrating Egypt into Arab and Islamic councils. Seeking arms and political support from powers external to the region, it has sharply modified its maximalist hardline attitude with respect to Israel. Saddam

Hussein has intimated that Iraq is prepared to accept Israel's permanence in the region.[39]

How the Iraqi Baath leaders view the future of their system in the Arab east is a matter for speculation. Their public pronouncements continue to exude confidence in the virtues and strengths of Baathism as they have defined it in the Iraqi context. The secular system which they believe constitutes a force for "progress versus (the forces of) medieval obscurantism" has failed to demonstrate its superiority over the latter. (The Iranians, of course, see the conflict as one of "atheism versus true faith.")[40] This is not to say that Iraqis, even Shia Iraqis, are eager to embrace Khomeini's vision of what constitutes a proper Islamic government. They manifestly are not, as the limited support for *al-Da'wah* and the performance of Iraqi soldiers attest. Nonetheless, the Iraqi leadership lives with the constant concern that the next Iranian attack might break Iraqi lines. The initial Iranian drive in the Huwayzah marsh area in February came close to severing the eastern route to Basra (an alternate road and a rail line lie far to the west).

Iraq's subsequent use of poison gas against Iranian troops in February and March stirred up strong international censure.[41] They were presumably unaware of the strong opposition to its use which prevails among industrial nations. The longlasting effects of gas in World War I so affected the Great Powers that they agreed to ban its use. The ban has held, with only a few small-scale exceptions, ever since. It is a rare example of weapons control that has actually held for decades, and the Western powers, at least, want to keep it that way.

The United States had adopted a neutral position with respect to the Iran-Iraq war. However, the potentially adverse consequences of an Iranian victory for the smaller Gulf states and for US interests gradually induced a US "tilt" toward the Iraqi side.[42] The tilt did not involve military equipment, as the administration concluded that Iraq primarily needed financial assistance and improvement in officer morale, neither of which could be provided by the United States.[43] However, the United States has provided $840 million in commodity credits for the purchase of food, which Iraq imports in large quantities.[44]

The United States reacted quickly to reports of Iraqi use of chemical weapons.[45] Although Iraqi leaders denied all charges, US officials said that they had "incontrovertible evidence that Iraq used nerve gas in its war with Iran."[46] Relations between the United States and Iraq have suffered as a result of the former's condemnation. It is unclear at this writing whether the same will be true of Iraqi relations with major European states. At the least, they will probably seek to prevent the shipment of materials which could be used for the manufacture of poison gas, although many legitimate uses for some of the chemicals involved will make this difficult. The Western powers in general do not wish to see Iraq defeated by Iran, and so the willingness of states already selling conventional arms to Iraq is unlikely to be affected.

FUTURE POLICY

A policy consists of "the decisions and actions of state regimes to produce desired outcomes. For a state to have (an external) policy it must . . . have some capacity . . . of affecting the behavior of . . . peoples abroad in these intended ways."[47] The Baath regime's policy of implied use of force achieved many of its desired results in the 1978-1980 period as it led the Arab world in opposing the Egyptian-Israeli rapprochement. In 1981-1982, the regime was successful in persuading its Gulf neighbors to contribute money to the war effort; to some extent this is still the case. Baghdad also extracted financial concessions from European states on the grounds that Iraq as a major market would remember its friends after the war.

In moving to open war with Iran, the Iraqi regime overreached. An effective military policy must be commensurate with the means available. Saddam Hussein knew what he wanted: the collapse of a menacing regime in neighboring Iran. His means were another matter. The most revealing statement of Iraq's failure to relate means to military policy goals came from its deputy minister of oil eighteen months after the war began. He said that "Iraqi oil refineries, pumping stations, and loading terminals were inadequately protected at the outbreak of war because *the government did not expect them to become combat targets*" (emphasis added).[48] It is ironic that the Baath regime, which is regularly chastised by Tehran for the Christian background of Baath founder, Michel Aflaq, and of its chief foreign policy spokesman, Tariq Aziz, did not adequately ponder a two millenia-old piece of wisdom: "What king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?"[49]

For now, Iraqi military policy consists of defense against recurrent Iranian attacks, coupled with a hope that something—notably Khomeini's death—will so divert Iranian energies that a slackening of military activity, if not a true cease-fire, will permit its leaders to breathe more easily. Unless or until that happens, their positions are at risk, and their country's military policy has to be confined to defense against Iranian attacks. It can do no more.

ENDNOTES

1. Saddam Hussein, Radio Baghdad, 6 March 1984, as reported in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service* (hereafter *FBIS*), no. 846, p. E1.

2. *The Military Balance, 1978-1979* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1978), p. 37.

3. For a general analysis of Iraqi domestic and external security policy, cf. John F. Devlin, "Iraq," in Edward A. Kolodziej and Robert E. Harkavy, eds., *Security Policies of Developing Countries* (Lexington and Toronto: Lexington Books, 1982), pp. 227-245.

4. Jed C. Snyder, "The Road to Osiraq: Baghdad's Quest for the Bomb," *Middle East Journal*, vol. 37, no. 4, 1983, pp. 565-593. Quotation is on p. 587.

5. This is a conclusion I have reached in the course of a study, now being readied for publication, of the abortive Syrian-Iraqi unity effort of 1978-1979. Bakr appears to have been inclined toward trying to overcome the differences impeding unity. Saddam was not. The timing also suggests that Saddam felt it necessary to attend the Non-Aligned Conference in Havana, early in September 1979, as head of state, in order to secure Baghdad as the site of the next conference, scheduled for 1982. He attached great importance to being the host for this meeting.

6. Saddam Hussein, speech at a public rally. *Iraqi News Agency* (hereafter *INA*), 8 August 1979, as reported in *FBIS*, 9 August 1979, no. 155, p. E2.

7. Address to military officers in Sulaymaniyah, 25 August 1979, as reported in *FBIS*, 28 August 1979, no. 168, p. E1.

8. See for example, Saddam Hussein, ". . . the Iraqi army remained . . . true . . . to its pan-Arab goals . . ." Baghdad, *Voice of the Masses*, 6 January 1981, as reported in *FBIS*, 7 January 1981 no. 004, p. E1. Also, "We Iraqi people, the defender of the eastern flank of the

Arab world . . ." Radio Baghdad, 20 June 1982, as reported in *FBIS*, 20 June 1984, no. 118, p. E1.

9. Baghdad, *Voice of the Masses*, 8 February 1980, as report in *FBIS*, 11 February 1984, no. 029, p. E1.

10. Baghdad, *Voice of the Masses*, 25 March 1980, as reported in *FBIS*, 27 March 1980, no. 061, p. E1. Saddam did not attend the conference. A speech, read for him by a member of his inner circle, was a boiler-plate attack on the "American-Al-Sadat-Zionist" alliance.

11. Ann T. Schulz, "Iran," in Kolodziej and Harkavy, eds., p. 250.

12. Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz is quoted in *Al-Nahar al Arabi wa al-Duwali*, 24 December 1979, "Iraq does not accept this (Algiers) agreement," (which was signed under pressure, as reported in *FBIS*, 26 December 1979, no. 249, p. E1)

13. *Al-Mustagbal* (Paris), 2 February 1979, as reported in *FBIS*, 9 February 1979, no. 029, p. E2. The Iraqi also said, "All our border, Kurdish, and water problems with Iran have been solved."

14. Radio Tehran, 29 May 1979, as reported in *FBIS, 31 May 1979, no. 106, p. E1.*

15. *Keyhan* (Tehran), cited on Radio Tehran, 13 June 1979, as reported in *FBIS*, 14 June 1984, no. 115, p. E1.

16. Stephen R. Grummon, *The Iran-Iraq War: Islam Embattled*, (Washington Papers No. 92. Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, 1982), p. 12.

17. Grummon, *op. cit.*, p. 14. Curiously, more than a year earlier, Sa'd Qasim Hammudi, Iraqi Minister of Information, stated that "in accordance with the 1975 Algiers agreement, areas of Iraq which were occupied by the Shah were returned." Baghdad, *INA*, 16 June 1979, as reported in *FBIS*, 18 June 1979, no. 118, p. E2. He did not identify the areas specifically.

18. See Shireen Hunter's article where the Iranian judgment of being able to resist only four days is given.

19. Baghdad, *INA*, 10 September 1980, as reported in *FBIS*, 11 September 1980, no. 177, p. E1.

20. National Foreign Assessment Center, *International Energy Statistical Review*, (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 1980), 30 December 1980, p. 1, and 29 September 1981, p. 1.

21. *Middle East Economic Survey,* vol. 25, no. 29, 3 May 1982, p. 6. Dollar figures are calculated at 1 ID to $3.386.

22. Ibid., vol. 27, no. 7, 28 November 1983, pp. A2 and A3.

23. Numbers are from the relevant annual issues of *The Military Balance,* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies)

24. Baghdad, *Observer, 17 July 1981, p. 5.* Quoting Taha Yasin Ramadan, head of the People's Army.

25. *The Economist,* 24 March 1984, p. 31.

26. Baghdad, *INA,* 9 June 1982, as reported in *FBIS,* 10 June 1982, no. 112, p. E1.

27. Fakhri's assignment to the security post was widely rumored at the time. Both the security appointment and his later return to field command were reported in *The Economist,* 24 March 1984, p. 32.

28. Devlin, "Iraq," in Kolodziej and Harkavy, eds., *p. 227.*

29. Majid Hamid Mussa, "The Story Behind the Fact," *World Marxist Review,* vol. 26, no. 8 August 1983, p. 74; Iraqi Foreign Ministry statement reported by *INA,* 27 May 1983, as reported in *FBIS,* 31 May 1983, no. 105, p. E1.

30. Baghdad, *Voice of the Masses,* 8 February 1980, as reported in *FBIS,* 11 February 1980, no. 029, p. E1.

31. Hanna Batatu, "Iraq's Underground Shia Movements: Characteristics, Causes, and Prospects," *Middle East Journal,* vol. 35, no. 4, Autumn 1981, p. 578.

32. *Philadelphia Inquirer,* 1 April 1984.

33. Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Iraq-Iran War: Attrition Now, Chaos Later," *Armed Forces Journal International,* May 1983, p. 41.

34. Hamilton A. Twitchell, "The Iran-Iraq Oil War," *Geopolitics of Energy,* vol. 5, no. 10, October 1983, p. 2.

35. Radio Baghdad, 9 April 1984, as reported in *FBIS,* 10 April 1984, no. 070, p. E1.

36. Baghdad, *INA,* 18 January 1984, as reported in *FBIS,* 19 January, no. 013, 1984, p. E1. Iraq's official position on the reason for supporting Egypt's return was put by Taha Yasin Ramadan to *Al-Majallah* (London), 14 January 1984, as "our move to establish a certain type of relation between Iraq and Egypt is not related to the

war . . . (but comes) from the belief that Egypt's return to the Arab nation is a lofty objective," as reported in *FBIS,* 17 January 1984, no. 011, p. E3.

37. Radio Monte Carlo, 25 March 1984, as reported in *FBIS,* 26 March 1984, no. 059, p. E2.

38. *Middle East Economic Survey,* vol. 27, no. 7, 28 November 1983, p. A2.

39. In an interview with US Congressman Stephen Solarz, in August 1982 (but not released by Iraq until 1983) Saddam Hussein said, "I believe that the simultaneous existence of an independent Palestinian state acceptable to the Palestinians and the existence of a secure state for the Israelis are both necessary." Baghdad, *INA,* 2 January 1983 (as reported in *FBIS,* 4 January 1983, no. 002, p.E10.

40. Richard Bulliet, "Time, Perceptions, and Conflict Resolution," in Shirin Taher-Khlei and Shaheen Ayubi, eds., *The Iran-Iraq War: New Weapons, Old Conflicts,* (New York: Praeger, 1983) p. 74.

41. *Newsweek,* 19 March 1984, p. 39.

42. *Newsweek* 2 January 1984, p. 15; and 5 March 1984, p. 46.

43. *New York Times,* 11 January 1984, p. 8.

44. *N.Y.T.,* 11 March 1984, p. 14.

45. *N.Y.T.* 5 March 1984, p. 3.

46. *N.Y.T.,* 30 March 1984, p. 8.

47. Kolodziej and Harkavy, "Introduction," *Security Policies,* p. 13.

48. Interview with Edward Cody, *Washington Post,* 18 March 1982, p. 117. Iran attacked oil installations before Iraq did; the latter responded quickly.

49. Luke 14:31.

Chapter 7

THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR AND IRAN'S DEFENSE POLICY

Shireen Hunter

IRAN'S PERCEPTION OF DEFENSE NEEDS

The foreign policy objectives of nations shape defense policies, as do internal political factors, particularly in the Third World. Such factors as actual or perceived internal threats to the ruling authorities and the established power structure influence a country's defense policy and the organization of its armed forces.

Iran's defense policy, in both the pre- and post-revolutionary periods, has been influenced by domestic and external imperatives, but the implications of policy differed since Iran's pre- and post-revolutionary leaders have held different views on the relative importance of domestic and external factors. The Iran-Iraq war, however, changed Iran's perceptions of its defense needs and the structure of its defense forces. There is now a closer resemblance to the pre-revolutionary defense posture. Iran's revolutionary leaders are now aware of the importance of a strong national defense force, and of Iran's geo-strategic position.

Consequently Iran's current defense policies must be viewed within the context of traditional policy determinants, the pre-revolutionary defense establishment, the impact of the Islamic revolution, and the changes necessitated by the war with Iraq.

DETERMINANTS OF IRAN'S DEFENSE POLICIES

GeoStrategic Conditions

Iran's entire northern frontier is bounded by the Soviet Union, while in the east and west, Iran shares borders with Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq. It has a long shoreline on the Gulf and on the Gulf of Oman. Therefore, as Iran's only water outlet to the rest of the world, the Gulf holds special significance for the country's military strategists. The long common frontier with the Soviet Union and Iran's vital oil industry create particular defense dilemmas for Iran.

Historical Experience

In the context of Soviet-US rivalry Iran has four possible defense strategies: to rely on the good will of its big-power neighbor to respect its independence, in exchange for Iran's avoiding close relations with a rival power; to enter into an alliance with a distant, rival Western power; to enlist the support of a third power in order to neutralize the pressure and influence of the two principal protagonists; and to remain scrupulously neutral in the great-power rivalry while developing a strong national defense force.

Iran has resorted, at one time or another, to most of these strategies and has been left with a negative, even bitter, legacy. Iran's efforts to enlist the support of a third power, in order to balance British and Russian pressures during the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, failed. The policy of strict neutralism was also a failure, as illustrated by Iran's occupation by foreign forces during both World Wars. Given the expansionist thrust of Czarist Soviet policies, resulting in frequent losses of territory by Iran and constant fears of dismemberment, the strategy of reliance on the good will of the big-power neighbor has never been a real choice for Iran. The strategy of alliance with a distant Western power was resorted to late in Iran's history and, while relatively more successful, even this policy was not totally satisfactory because the alliance was basically a patron-client relationship. There were often reasonable doubts about the resolve of the big-power ally to defend Iran.[1]

Thus, Iran's historical experience has produced a strong bias in favor of a defense strategy based on a policy of nonalignment and non-involvement with great powers, together with the development of a strong national defense force. However the lack of adequate technological and financial resources, plus certain domestic political inhibitions, have prevented Iran from ever successfully pursuing this strategy.

Systemic Influences

Iran's geostrategic position makes all aspects of its international relations, including its defense policy, susceptible to changes in the international system and in big-power relations. For the last two hundred years, Iran has operated within a bi-polar environment, even though during the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century the central balance—that of Europe—was multi-polar. Iran has felt safest when relations between rival powers have been competitive enough to prevent their reaching an agreement at Iran's expense, and when the powers reciprocally checked any moves that could harm Iranian interests.

Soviet-US relations during the 1960s exemplify this condition and were suited to Iran's interests. However, by the early 1970s, the onset of détente had once again raised Iran's anxieties regarding possible collusion between the two superpowers at Iran's expense. Iran feared that détente in Europe would cause the two superpowers to shift their attention to other "hunting grounds."[2] This heightened sense of anxiety intensified Iran's underlying preference for a defense strategy based primarily on a strong national defense force.

A number of changes in the Middle East regional subsystem also contributed to the shift in Iran's defense strategy. The most important of the regional changes was Britain's decision—announced in 1968—to withdraw its military forces from the Gulf by 1971. Meanwhile, the Vietnam War generated in the United States a mood which favored reduction of US overseas defense obligations. The United States was unwilling to fill the power vacuum left by Britain's withdrawal. Iran's efforts to create a self-reliant military force capable of defending the country were, therefore, accelerated.

Perceptions of Security Threats

Russia—both imperial and socialist—has been seen as the principal security threat to Iran for two centuries. At the same time, because of military retrenchment in the United States, Iran's faith in the resolve of its superpower ally to protect it against possible Soviet attack was weakened. In fact, the Shah complained on many occasions that the United States was acting like a "crippled giant."[3] Thus, despite the overwhelming disparity between its military capabilities and those of the USSR, Iran had opted for a policy of strong defense as a deterrent against the Soviet Union, hoping to raise the cost of a Soviet invasion sufficiently to discourage it. Iran also hoped that if it put up a credible defense against the USSR, the United States would be obliged to come to its rescue. According to Iranian thinking, the defense buildup was intended as "an insurance policy, a lock on the door to deter the potential aggressor. By raising the threshhold of force required to subjugate Iran, the arms buildup [was] to act as a trip-wire or alarm which will make indifference, indecision, or preoccupation elsewhere difficult."[4]

The threat of a direct military attack by the Soviet Union subsided by the 1970s, but the overall Soviet threat to Iran's security seemed to have increased with greater Soviet naval power and closer Soviet ties with Iraq and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. The Soviet threat to Iran was more diffuse and no longer limited to the northern frontiers.

On the other borders, Iran did not face the threat of a direct military attack. It had friendly relations with Turkey and Pakistan and reasonably good relations with Afghanistan. Iraq, because of its territorial, ideological, and other differences with Iran, did constitute a potential threat, but given Iraq's internal problems and the balance of military power between the two countries during most of the 1960s and the 1970s, a direct military attack by Iraq was not considered a serious security threat to Iran.

Iran was, however, concerned about the internal stability of some of its other neighbors. For example, Iran was disturbed by the separation of Pakistan's eastern wing (Bangladesh) following the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971, and by the growth of separatist movements in Pakistan's Baluchi and northwestern provinces. Iran's strategy was, therefore, to shore up Pakistan to prevent its further disintegration, and to prevent the spread of separatist movements, particularly among the Baluchis, to Iran. Across the Gulf, Iran was concerned about the stability of its Arab neighbors, threatened by spreading radicalism in the area, and by Soviet efforts to increase its presence in the Gulf.

Domestic Factors

Traditionally, various characteristics of Iran as a nation have tended to promote strong national defense. These have included Iran's size, its ethnic and linguistic diversity, its traditions of tribal truculence, and a history of homegrown or foreign-inspired separatist movements. Moreover, since the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty, the armed forces have been the principal support for the regime. The Pahlavi regime's reliance on the armed forces to maintain its power reached its peak during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah. During the 1970s, increasing domestic opposition and the appearance of urban guerrilla and other subversive elements intensified the regime's reliance on the armed forces.

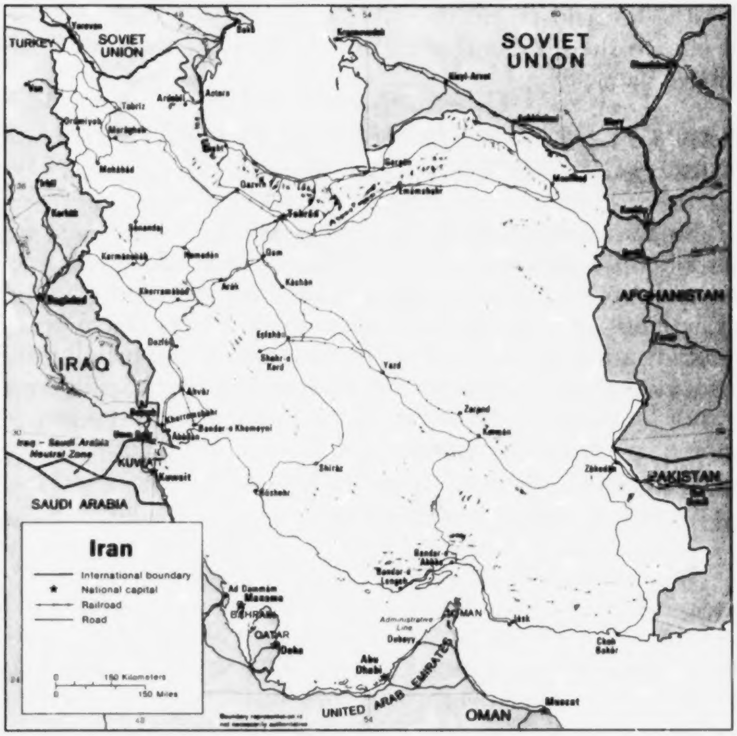
A strong military force was also necessary for domestic political purposes, for keeping internal order and protecting the Shah's rule. However, Iran's armed forces were neither appropriately equipped nor trained to deal with internal security problems, as became apparent during the 1978 riots which ultimately led to the collapse of the imperial regime.

Resource Constraints

Traditionally, the lack of adequate financial and technological resources frustrated Iran's efforts to develop a viable defense force, and Iran's appeals to foreign powers for funds were unsuccessful. However, by the late 1960s, Iran's financial position had improved considerably. The oil price explosion of 1973 enabled Iran to embark on a massive expansion of its defense forces and military training program, which continued—even through the 1976 dip in oil revenues—to the end of the Shah's regime.

Foreign Policy Objectives

During the 1970s, Iran's view of its defense requirements reflected a vastly expanded vision of its regional and international role. Thus, in the mid-1970s Iran extended its defense perimeter (Harim Amniyati) from the Gulf to the northern reaches of the Indian Ocean, and assumed responsibility for defending its Gulf neighbors against subversion and attacks.



Iran
International boundary
National capital
Railroad
Road
0 150 Kilometers
0 150 Miles
SOVIET UNION
SOVIET UNION
TURKEY
IRAQ
Iraq – Saudi Arabia Neutral Zone
KUWAIT
SAUDI ARABIA
BAHRAIN
QATAR
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
OMAN
OMAN
AFGHANISTAN
PAKISTAN
Tabrīz
Orūmīyeh
Marāgheh
Ardabīl
Astara
Mahābād
Qazvīn
Tehrān
Emāmshahr
Sanandaj
Hamadān
Kermānshāh
Qom
Arāk
Kāshān
Khorramābād
Dezfūl
Eşfahān
Shahr-e Kord
Yazd
Ahvāz
Khorramshahr
Ābādān
Bandar-e Khomeyni
Zarand
Kermān
Shīrāz
Būshehr
Zāhedān
Bandar-e 'Abbās
Bandar-e Lengeh
Jāsk
Chāh Bahār
Mashhad
Baghdad
Kuwait
Ad Dammām
Manama
Doha
Abu Dhabi
Dubayy
Muscat
Administrative Line
Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative
48
54
60

Many of Iran's Gulf neighbors were discomfited by the Shah's determination to make Iran the principal military power on the Gulf and preferred to develop their own defensive capacity.

IRAN'S PRE-REVOLUTION DEFENSE STRATEGY AND FORCE STRUCTURE

By the mid-1970s, Iran's military policies could best be described by the words, "tous azimuts." That is, Iran had set for itself several defense goals—mixing internal and external objectives—of more-or-less equal importance. These goals include: prevention of a Soviet attack on Iran by making the costs of such an action prohibitive for the USSR; preservation of Iran's territorial integrity and prevention of the development of separatist movements in Iran; protection of the regime against internal opposition and regionally based domestic subversion; and preservation of Gulf stability.

In general, the organization of Iran's defense forces and the position of the military within Iranian society reflected these goals. In its military expansion plans, Iran paid roughly equal attention to the development of its air force, navy, and ground forces, since all three were considered necessary for the achievement of its goals. Although the military expanded significantly, Iranian forces were never combat-tested—beyond the limited experience in Oman against the Dhofari rebels—in the pre-revolutionary era. The Iranian forces' loyalty to the Shah was not tested either.

Although the military became one of the most privileged segments of Iranian society, the Shah and his men continued to doubt the ultimate loyalty of the armed forces and this suspicion affected the military's command and control structure. Doubts stemmed from the events of the 1950s when the Shan was first deposed and the armed forces were penetrated by Tudeh Party members. The Shah had also observed the results of a too independent military in other Middle East countries, and so he was careful to prevent the emergence of charismatic military officers with close ties to the rank and file.[5]

THE IMPACT OF THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION

Iran's geostrategic position has not changed and the proximity to the Soviet Union still poses security problems for Iran. Iran's ethnic and linguistic diversities continue to pose problems of separatism that have become more serious since the revolution, as illustrated by unrest in Iran's Kurdish provinces and, to a lesser extent, in Baluchistan and Azerbaijan. Therefore, many of the former incentives for comprehensive defense policies and a strong national defense system remain valid.

However, Iran's revolutionary leaders hold different views regarding the principal sources of threat to Iran's security and the best strategy for dealing with them. Among the most significant differences is the attitude of the present leadership toward the Soviet threat and how best to deal with it. The revolutionary leaders appear to hold the view that there is no effective military defense in face of the Soviet Union's overwhelming power. Implicit in current Iranian policy is the notion that Iran's ultimate defense against the Soviet Union lies in the restraining influence of American policy in the Gulf and the Soviet desire to avoid hostilities with the United States. The present coolness in superpower relations also reassures the Iranians about the threat of possible superpower collusion at Iran's expense, although this could change in the future.

Iran's leaders are very much aware of the US presence in the Gulf and take into account possible US reactions to any Iranian attack on Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. They seem to believe that the United States, barring extreme provocation, will be deterred from attacking Iran because of fear of Soviet reaction. This view was expressed by Captain Abzail, commander of Iran's naval forces, in an interview on November 27, 1982: "... If we put the balance of strategic forces [between the United States and the USSR] on the table, in my view direct US intervention cannot take place, but given the lunatics living in the White House, nothing is improbable."[6]

Iran's revolutionary leaders also have totally different views regarding Iran's foreign policy objectives, especially in the Gulf. Iran's policy of assuming major defense responsibilities toward the Gulf had persistently been criticized by the Iranian opposition as a costly venture principally serving the interests of the West. Thus, one of Iran's first post-revolutionary foreign policy initiatives was to abandon the role of Gulf policeman. Moreover, the government of Iran considers the power of its revolutionary message, rather than military force, as the main instrument of its foreign policy in the Gulf and beyond.

These current perceptions of Iran's security needs and foreign policy objectives have shaped the views of Iran's revolutionary leadership regarding the country's defense requirements and the structure of its armed forces. However, the overriding defense and foreign policy determinant has been domestic political considerations, especially the imperatives of consolidating the revolution and stamping out any sentiments or efforts against it. Consequently, the questions of the organization of the armed forces and their place in the Iranian society have become enmeshed in broader political debates regarding the nature and direction of the new regime, and in intra-regime power plays as well.

As the most important supporter of the pre-revolutionary regime, the military became the first target of revolutionary purification and reconstruction. In addition the revolutionary regime—particularly the clerical factions—have encouraged the expansion of the Revolutionary Guards and their development into a para-military force, loyal to the regime, alongside the regular armed forces.

ISLAMIZATION OF THE MILITARY

Almost immediately after returning to Tehran, Ayatollah Khomeini sent a message to the military inviting them to join the revolution, at the same time warning them of the dire consequences which would befall them if they did not. In one of his speeches, the Ayatollah stated, "... I say to the army generals that once they have put an end to the army's aggression, once they have joined the nation and the legal and national Islamic government, we will consider them as one with the nation and the nation as one with them." He also warned that should "the army return to the political arena ... then it will become necessary to crush them more severely; and the people must defend themselves with all their might."[7]

Despite this initial conciliatory message, the revolutionary government embarked on a vigorous purification of the armed forces for several reasons. The armed forces did not take any measures to prevent the return of the Ayatollah Khomeini, but sympathizers of the old regime were still numerous in their ranks; hence the army forces were mistrusted by the revolutionary regime. The military was seen by many revolutionaries as the Shah's personal legacy, as well as the most formidable reminder of a political system that they wanted to dismantle. Many groups—especially the leftist and muslim-leftist groups—demanded the dismantling of the military and the creation of a popular national army. Among these groups were the Fedayian-e-Khalq, a Marxist group, and the Mojahedin-e-Khalq, an Islamic socialist group.[8]

Initially, the revolutionary government was forced to react cautiously to these demands because the Islamic regime felt vulnerable and threatened by a variety of forces, including armed leftist groups that would have gained disproportionate influence had the armed forces been dismantled. Furthermore, unrest in the provinces required the assistance of the armed forces to reestablish order.

As a result, the initial purges of the military were relatively minor, limited to the higher echelons and to those officers who were closely identified with the Shah's regime. Eighty members of the Shah's military and security apparatus were executed during these initial purges. Command positions went to those professional officers who had had a falling-out with the Shah. (Rear Admiral Admad Mahani and General Taqi Riyani were the most prominent among such figures.)[9] Khomeini and other members of the revolutionary government frequently stressed the importance of a strong, reformed national defense force. Chamran, Iran's first civilian minister of defense, argued that a strong national defense force was necessary to safeguard both Iran's independence and territorial integrity and the Islamic revolution, emphasizing that Iran's defense forces should be fundamentally reformed in order to be able to discharge these duties. This statement by Chamran apparently launched the second phase of purges of the armed forces.[10]

The second purge extended to the lower echelons of the military including those officers whose loyalty was suspect, even though they were not accused of any serious crime against the revolution. As a result of these purges, about 12,000 members of the armed forces were expelled by September 1980. Two factors influenced this larger purge. By the end of 1979, the Islamic government felt more secure, having successfully dealt with the opposition. The Revolutionary Guards were assuming larger responsibility for the maintenance of order and for quelling unrest in the provinces. Consequently, the government was feeling less dependent on the armed forces. Second, the course of the hostage crisis and the abortive US rescue mission intensified the Iranian government's preoccupation with counter-revolutionary actions. There was a great deal of apprehension within the government over possible collusion between the armed forces and the US government.

The purges focussed mainly on the army: of the 12,000 personnel purged by September 1980, 10,000 served in the army and only 2,000 in the navy and the air force. The reason that the army took the brunt of the purge was that the army had traditionally been more involved in domestic politics and had frequently been used by the previous regime to put down domestic unrest and control opposition. Its role in confronting the demonstrators during the bloody days of September 1978 in Tehran was a particularly important factor. The navy, by contrast, had rarely been involved in domestic politics. It was not involved in the government instituted by the Shah, nor was it involved in quelling the demonstrators. The air force, in the last days of the revolution, had opposed the military government. Thus, both the navy and the air force had relatively good revolutionary credentials. Even so, neither of the two services altogether escaped the purges. One hundred of the best US-trained Iranian pilots were dismissed.

The purges were not the only problem of the military. There were large desertions of conscripts, a near total lapse of military discipline, and a breakdown of the chain of command. Revolutionary councils composed of junior ranks challenged the appointments of officers and severely undermined the whole concept of military authority. In fact, the situation became so unruly that the Ayatollah Khomeini had to intervene and demand a return to discipline.[11] However, the situation did not change significantly until Iraq attacked Iran and created a new set of circumstances. Nevertheless, the decimated military establishment was still held suspect, especially by the clerical faction. At the same time, debate over the nature and direction of Iran's new regime continued. The role of the military in Iran's new society was more involved in political questions and the factional rivalry within the revolutionary leadership.

THE IMPACT OF THE WAR WITH IRAQ

When, in September 1980, Iraq attacked Iran's southwestern province of Khuzistan, Iranian forces were incapable of putting up a credible defense. In fact, as one expert has put it, "Iran virtually provoked the war, but it had no defense strategy." Iranian provocations were only one cause for Iraq's invasion. Anthony Cordesman provides an authoritative list of Iraqi motives which shows that they were a mixture of fear and ambition:

> —To secure the Ba'ath regime from Khomeini's ideological threat
> —To claim 200-300 square kilometers near Ghasr-Shirin which the Shah had promised to Iraq
> —To establish Iraq's control over Shatt al-Arab, to demonstrate Iraq's dominant power in the Gulf, and to enhance Iraq's stature at the 1982 non-aligned conference
> —To destroy Iran's military power
> —To overthrow Khomeini
> —To conquer or "liberate" Khuzistan and bring it under Arab rule.[12]

Iran's inability to meet the Iraqi attack owing to the disarray of its military forces was worsened by an equally damaging power struggle within the Iranian leadership, centering on President Bani Sadr and Prime Minister Rajai. Bani Sadr has claimed that he received plans of an Iraqi attack which he passed on to Rajai, but because of his rivalry with Rajai the warning went unheeded by the prime minister and other revolutionary leaders. On the other hand, a book published by the Revolutionary Guards corps in 1982 claims that,

> as early as mid-1979 that provisional government of Mehdiz BaZargan was aware of Iraqi military activity in

> Iran's border which showed signs of that country's preparation for a wide-spread aggression against Iran and the Islamic Revolution. However, neither the army nor the IRGC were prepared to even think of measures to counter this development.[13]

As a result of the distintegration of the command structure of the armed forces, large-scale desertions by conscripts, and political rivalries—including the rivalry between the professional army and the Revolutionary Guards—Iran responded very poorly to Iraq's attacks. During the early part of the war each of the services planned and conducted its own independent operations. More important, the army was not used effectively in this period, and the Revolutionary Guards and the local civilian irregulars did most of the fighting. Most of the army, under the direction of then Defense Minister Chamran, was engaged in operations against Kurdish dissidents. According to at least one report, units were also poised along the northern border to guard against an invasion by the Soviet Union. However, although the Iranians might have been worried about a possible Soviet move against Iran, especially after the Afghanistan episode, concern over regional unrest, and the desire to keep the army occupied away from sensitive political areas was a more important reason.[14]

Doubts about the loyalty of the army still lingered. In this connection it should be remembered that, prior to Iraq's attack, there had been close contacts between a number of exiled Iranian political leaders (such as Shapur Bakhtyar) and ex-Iranian members of the armed forces and Iraqi leaders. The Islamic government was fearful that collusion among the army, the Iranian exiles, and the Iraqi forces might topple the regime.

The navy and the air force performed somewhat better, since they were less affected by purges; and certain government actions, such as the freeing of 40 air force pilots from jail, improved their situation. However, the air force was weakened—perhaps even more than other services—by the lack of spare parts and the shortage of critical technical skills, even though Iranian technicians showed considerable ingenuity in cannibalizing damaged or inoperative equipment to keep planes operational. The lack of coordination among the services and rivalry between the regular army and the Revolutionary Guards, who reflected the stance of the revolutionary leadership, were the problems that had the most far-reaching consequences.

As the relationship between then President Bani-Sadr and the rest of the Islamic leadership became more and more strained, the war effort was affected. The Supreme Defense Council (SDC), which was set up after the war began, was disfunctional because of rivalry. The cleric-dominated part of the Islamic government was concerned about the close links developing between Bani-Sadr, who was spending much of his time at the front, and the army. The fear was that Bani-Sadr would use the army to strengthen his position at the clerical faction's expense. Initially, Bani-Sadr, as the Commander in Chief, had tried to impose his exclusive influence on the armed forces, but the change in the composition of the SDC, imposed by Khomeini, frustrated this tactic. Moreover, the SDC decided to appoint permanent representatives to various fronts, despite protests from Bani-Sadr.[15] Inability to reach decisions over war-related issues, lack of cohesion among regular forces and paramilitary groups, and confusion over the whole issue of command and control continued until the ouster of Bani-Sadr.

Although Bani-Sadr's ouster did not end either Iran's political divisions or the power struggle within its leadership, it established at least for a time the supremacy of the clerical factions and their allies within the Islamic government. The impact of the victory of the clerical faction within Iran's leadership was also felt by the armed forces. The government began a systematic process of Islamization and control of the military. The tactics employed by the government included the use of the Revolutionary Guards and "Basiji" (the national mobilization movement launched by Khomeini during the hostage crisis) as counterforces against the military; the creation of a wide intelligence and propaganda network which permeates all of the armed forces; and the replacement of the old military commanders by younger officers whose loyalty is to the Islamic Republic.

The control and indoctrinization of the armed forces is carried out through the following four organizations:

- the political ideological circle (Da'ere Siyasi Ideologik)
- the strike group (Gorough Zarb) which, in fact, is a military police force;
- the information and guidance force (Etela' at va ershad). This is an intelligence-gathering force concentrating on the identification of political opposition;
- the Islamic society and Anjumani-i-Islam, which is a clergy-run intelligence force used for controlling suspected military personnel.[16]

The impact of these developments improved the organization of the armed forces and the relationship between the regular forces and the Revolutionary Guards. As a result, conflicting orders to the military were eliminated. There was a sharp increase in cooperation and joint operations between the regular armed forces and the Revolutionary Guards, and the military's performance in intelligence, tactics, and planning was greatly improved.

The following statement by Hojat-al-Islam Ali, Rabbaninezhad, Chief of the Ideological Policy Section of one of the South's Military Headquarters, although somewhat exaggerated, illustrates the extent of the Islamization of the army, and the integration of the army and the Revolutionary Guards; "... During the imposed war, the brother guards have been equipped with the best weapons, and the army brothers have been equipped with all forms of spirituality and belief ... Today although the army and the guards have separate names, they are in reality one. Militarism in the light of spirituality is quite tangible in the army and guards corp."[17] The effects of these improvements were felt on the battlefield where, after suffering a series of humiliating defeats, the Iranians forced the Iraqis to retreat.

PROJECTIONS

The growing control of the government over the armed forces and their gradual Islamization has somewhat redeemed the military in the eyes of Iran's revolutionary leaders.[18] However, given the incomplete and somewhat superficial Islamization of the armed forces, this redemption is far from total. In fact, the revolutionary regime continues to trust and favor the Revolutionary Guards over the regular defense forces. For example, the Revolutionary Guards are paid higher wages than the regular military and enjoy other privileges denied professional soldiers. A variety of ethnic and family ties also link the Guard members with the clerics. Further evidence of the clerics' mistrust of the regular army is seen in the other paramilitary groups which have been developed for purposes of internal policing and enforcing compliance with Islamic rules. For example, there are the *Gashtsar-Allah,* whose function is to enforce compliance with the rules of Muslim behavior, and the *Jumd-Allah,* whose task is to insure that all eligible youth are conscripted for military service.

More importantly, the clerics, not the professional military, seem to have the final word regarding vital issues of war and peace, often with disastrous consequences for Iran. In fact, Iran's tactical errors in the conduct of its war against Iraq, and its inability to exploit fully its military success to inflict any more serious defeats on Iraq, have been largely attributed to this factor.[19]

Nevertheless, domestic challenges (the separatist movement and general unrest in the provinces) and foreign threats have created a greater awareness of the necessity of a strong Iranian national defense force. Thus, the negative attitude of the clerics toward the regular military forces has moderated. The Islamic government's foreign policy of militant non-alignment that excludes an alliance-based defense strategy for Iran necessitates a strong defense force.

Recent developments in the Persian Gulf—mostly consequences of the Iran-Iraq war—include the growing Iraqi threat to Kharg Island and Iranian shipping, increasing defense efforts on the part of the Gulf's Arab countries, and greater US presence in the Gulf. These developments have once again focused Iran's attention on the Gulf as one of its two most important strategic flanks, the other being its northern frontier. Iran's perception of its role in the Gulf has also changed. Although Iran still insists that it will not play the role of the Gulf's policeman, recent statements by its leaders have increasingly linked the Gulf's security with that of Iran, emphasizing Iran's special position in the Gulf and prompting recollections of the country's pre-revolutionary days.

The war with Iraq has clearly revived many of Iran's old notions regarding a strong defense force and the importance of securing its borders. However, Iran at present does not seem to have a coherent defense strategy, and it is very difficult to discern with any clarity what the current regime perceives as the principal security threats to Iran—other than those posed by internal opposition and a possible linkage between the latter and the Iranian opposition in exile. In fact, certain aspects of Iran's foreign policy, and the concentration of virtually all of its armed forces on the war front with Iraq, have left Iran exposed and defenseless along some of its most vulnerable borders. It is paradoxical that while Iran pursues an anti-Soviet policy, it has removed its army from Soviet and Afghan borders (as well as from the border with Pakistan, toward whom Iran is not presently hostile).

The most influential factors in Iran's attitude toward both its defense strategy and the structure of its defense forces remain domestic political considerations and persistent doubts regarding the Islamic and revolutionary credentials of the military. Iran's revolutionary leaders have still not reached any definitive decisions regarding the role of the military in Iran's Islamic society.

The Ayatollah Khomeini and other Islamic leaders have frequently said that the military should stay out of politics, but nobody seems to believe that this will be the case once the war is over. On the contrary, all indications are that Islamization has not eliminated political divisions within the armed forces. The dismissal of the Commander of the Iranian Navy, Captain Afzali, on charges of affiliation with the Tudeh Party, demonstrated the vulnerability of the armed forces. Royalist tendencies are also very strong, while the Revolutionary Guards pose another problem. What future role will they play? Will they be integrated with the professional armed forces? Will they be disbanded, or will they be used as a paramilitary force by contenders for power in the post-Khomeini era?

The effectiveness of Iran's armed forces is seriously hampered by shortages of hardware. Although Syria, Libya, North Korea, China, and some East European countries supply Iran with light weaponry, the supply of modern aircraft and heavy armor has been cut off. Reliable data on Iran's military situation is difficult to come by, but there is general agreement that Iran has suffered serious military deterioration since 1978.[20] Iran's ability to develop a strong national defense force is being undermined by resource constraints. Similarly, Iran's military training efforts have suffered although some Iranians have been receiving military training in certain East European countries and, according to some reports, even in England.

Iran's professional armed forces were saved from complete ruin by the war with Iraq, and the revolutionary leaders seem finally to be awakening to the importance of a viable national defense force. The shape of Iran's future defense strategy and the structure of its military remain unclear, however. They are dependent on the uncertain outcome of the war, and on Iran's future political direction, especially after Khomeini's death.

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ENDNOTES

1. This underlying suspicion is the legacy of experience with the Great Powers, which have always found it possible to compromise over Iran in order to avoid confrontation. The Russo-British Agreement of 1907 and the Bevin-Molotov Agreement of 1945 are the best examples of such big-power behavior.

2. See, Shahram Chubin, "Iran's Foreign Policy 1960-1976: An Overview," in Hassein Amirsadeghi (ed), *The Twentieth Century Iran,* (New York: Homes and Meir, 1977), p. 201.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Shahram Chubin, "Iran's Defense and Foreign Policy," in A. Amiri and H. H. Twitchel, eds., *Iran in the 1980s,* (Tehran: Institute for International Political and Economic Studies, 1978), p. 315.

5. For a detailed study of the structure of Iran's armed forces see: Donald Vought, "Iran," in Richard A. Gabriel, ed., *Fighting Armies: Antagonists in the Middle East, A Combat Assessment.* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1983.)

6. See Joint Publication Research Service *(JPRS),* 14 January 1983, p. 126.

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GULF SECURITY
AND THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR

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